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ELEMENTARY

ENGLISH

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

30th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE: 1924-1954

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OCTOBER,
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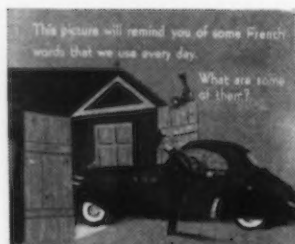
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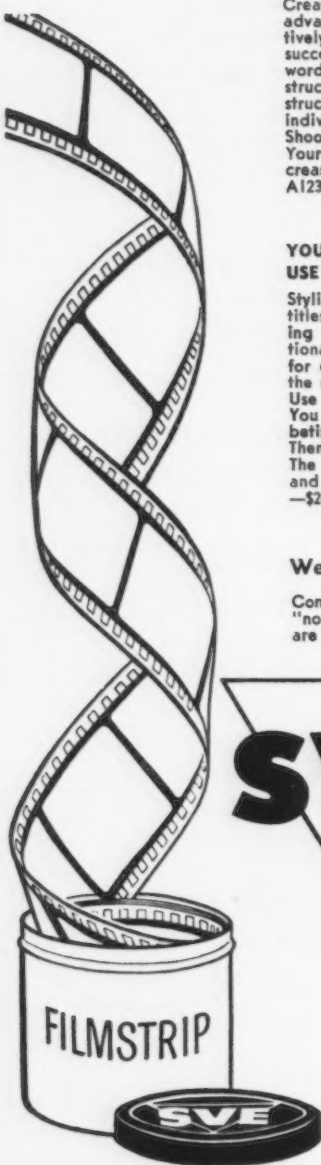
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An official organ of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
704 S. Sixth St., Champaign, Ill.

FOUNDED, 1924, BY C. C. CERTAIN

JOHN J. DEBOER, *Editor*
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

(Send all editorial communications to 300 Gregory Hall, The University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.)

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ELEMENTARY ENGLISH is published monthly from October to May by the National Council of Teachers of English at 704 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois. Subscription price \$3.50 per year; single copies 45 cents. Orders for less than a year's subscription will be charged at the single copy rate. ¶Postage is prepaid on all orders from the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoan Islands, Virgin Islands and Spain. ¶Postage is charged extra for Canada and for all other countries in the Postal Union as follows: 24 cents on annual subscription (total \$3.74), on single copies 3 cents (total 48 cents). ¶Patrons are requested to make all remittances payable to THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH in checks, money orders, or bank drafts. ¶Claims for missing numbers should be made within the month following the regular month of publication. The publishers expect to supply missing numbers free only when losses have been sustained in transit and when the reserve stock will permit. ¶All communications should be addressed to THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, 8110 S. Halsted Street, Chicago 20, Illinois. ¶Entered as second class matter December 30, 1942, at the post office at Champaign, Illinois under the Act of March 3, 1879. ¶Additional entry at Seymour, Indiana.

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Printed in the U. S. A.

By Way of Introduction . . .

The theme for our cover pictures this year will be "Children's Books about Other Countries." This month the illustration is taken from *Magic Maize*, by Mary and Conrad Buff (Houghton Mifflin, \$3.00, ages 8-12). It is the story of Fabian, an Indian boy of Guatemala, who grew up in the old Mayan beliefs but learned that the old and the new can live in peace.

We continue also this year our series of leading articles on prominent authors of current children's books. Genevieve Foster's biographies of Washington, Jackson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt bring to life not only their heroes, but the periods in which they lived. Our thanks to Miss SARA FENWICK for her fine account of these books and their use in school.

In this anniversary year for *Elementary English*, it seemed appropriate to turn to MRS. C. C. CERTAIN, whose husband was founder of this magazine, for a story of its early history. Between the time of her husband's death and the time when the Council acquired the magazine, Mrs. Certain ably edited it herself. She is now education librarian at the Enoch Pratt Free Library at Baltimore. W. WILBUR HATFIELD, who was good enough to write the historical sketch of the Council's relations with the elementary school, was for many years its secretary-treasurer, and is to thousands still Mr. N. C. T. E.

In November, 1942, this magazine, then known as *The Elementary English Review*, first appeared as a Council-edited journal. Most of its contents were devoted to a symposium on the teaching of reading in wartime, written by a number of well-known specialists in the field. This anniversary issue carries another symposium on reading, happily not in wartime. It will be continued next month by ALBERT J. HARRIS, RUTH STRANG, PAUL WITTY, and GERALD A. YOAKAM. It is hoped that other contributors to the earlier symposium may find it possible to participate in a round table on a related subject

that is now being planned for a forthcoming issue.

Book Week activities need to be planned well in advance. MARY COBER's interesting story of an elementary school book fair contains many excellent suggestions for this fall's festivities.

Readers of *Elementary English* will remember with pleasure MRS. CARRIE COFFEE STEGALL's description of a letter-writing project in her class in Holliday, Texas. In the same informal style she tells this month of another approach to the problem of motivating for correct usage.

DR. DWIGHT L. BURTON offers shrewd advice to the teacher who despairs of interesting some of the boys in reading.

It is a delight to read an educational article that avoids pedagogue. Miss IRMA DOVEY has written one for us this month on a very timely topic.

The idea of the experience approach to beginning reading is not new to most of us, but DAYTON BENJAMIN and ALICE BURTON describe it effectively for newcomers to our ranks. Experienced teachers, too, will find intriguing ideas in it.

We are glad to present the latest in Professor PAUL WITTY's series of reports on children and TV. Whether we approve of television fare or not, we do need to know what our children are viewing.

The "Councilletter" will be a regular feature of *Elementary English*. Each month one of the Council officers will discuss current N. C. T. E. activities, and Executive Secretary J. N. Hook will report interesting news developments in Council life.

The "Question Box," too, is a new feature which will be continued as long as the questions keep coming in. Nationally known specialists will undertake to answer questions about the various phases of the language arts. It is hoped that new teachers especially will avail themselves of this service.

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

XXXI

OCTOBER, 1954

No. 10

SARA INNIS FENWICK

Exploring History with Genevieve Foster

Anniversaries are occasions for thinking of history, whether it be only one year of history, or, as in the case of *Elementary English* this month, a span of thirty years. Almost invariably, when we think of a period of history in our own time, we recreate the course of events in terms of personal experiences. Finding ourselves engaged in this process of thinking, we cannot help calling to mind the author who has used, so successfully, this device for recreating history that it has real meaning for young people.

Genevieve Foster, according to one of the social studies teachers at The Laboratory School, is a creative craftsman in the materials of history. She has created a second dimension in the interpretation of history for young people, creating it, as she has said, out of her own need to understand history. Children, for the most part, have studied history as a vertical column

of events, in one country or region, year by year, marking off segments to be learned in one year. Thus, most of us studied the history of our own nation, first, from the discovery to the end of the Revolutionary War, then, to the end of the Civil

War, and then, if there were ever time, from the Reconstruction period to the present. Newer curricula have brought some changes in organization and correlation of the subject matter of history, but it is still largely considered in a vertical plane.

To acquire a concept of the relative time of history is not easy. Most of us adults have very fuzzy ideas of the time

occupied by epochs in world history. For example, the Roman Empire beginning in 27 B.C. with the reign of Augustus Caesar, to most people was characterized by a few

Miss Fenwick is Librarian, Elementary Library, The Laboratory School, University of Chicago.



Genevieve Foster

benevolent and more wicked rulers, was soon over-run by Gothic invaders, and declined. The fact that the Romans occupied one area, Britain, for 400 years, which is a period of time as long as Europeans have been on the North American continent, is, usually, a surprising fact. If a time sense is not easy for adults to exercise, how much more difficult it is for children! This fact is underscored for us, daily, when we realize that the *War* we speak of as adults is already ancient history to children, and that when they say the *War* they are referring to the Korean fighting.

Young people today have had contemporary history made alive to them in a most exciting way through the developments in news reporting by radio and television. A horizontal view of history in the making in today's current events is a part of every day's experience for children. They know what is going on in Indo-China, in Germany, in Africa, in the world of science, the world of sport, of drama, music, and art, as well as in those less desirable portions of the current scene in police court and under-world. Children still need, however, as desperately as any generation has ever needed, a similarly broad view of what has happened in the past in order to develop the perspective which will help them to form-value judgments. Genevieve Foster, in her "World" books, has provided materials upon which such understandings can be nourished.

George Washington's World, *Abraham Lincoln's World*, *Augustus Caesar's World* were not planned as merely supplementary materials for an area of social studies. To use them thus is to limit their usefulness. Mrs. Foster designed them each as an introduction to a period of history,

as basic to an understanding that lives of outstanding men who punctuate all history were not lived in isolation, but, while they were exerting qualities of leadership in one country, other men and women were at various stages of their careers in other national scenes. Thus, we read in *George Washington's World* while George Washington was growing up on Ferry Farm in Virginia, Catherine the Great went to Russia, James Watt was busy in his father's shop, Marie Theresa became Queen of Austria, Chien Sung had begun his reign as Emperor of China, George III was growing up in the Court of England, Daniel Boone was learning to hunt. None of these people were without influence on the life of the future leader of our country.

A graphic illustration of the vitality of a program of study based on this approach to a period of history was presented at The Laboratory School, University of Chicago, during the Summer School, 1954, where the reading activities of the upper-age group, which included children at four grade levels from fifth to ninth, were based upon the book, *George Washington's*





World. The objectives of the program included that of developing skill in informational reading, a greater interest in reading of biography, and an appreciation of the history of our nation and its place in world history.

Interest was aroused by discussions of the meaning of the term *contemporary*, and what its significance was to each of the group, in terms of recent world events. *George Washington's World* was introduced, and first enthusiasm was aroused by the double-page illustrations of people and events which were contemporary with the various phases of Washington's life. During the summer session, each one in the group read the book at his own pace. In addition, each child read more material about any one or more persons contemporary with Washington, and shared his reading with the group in various ways: through story, biography, oral report, drawing, and painting. One thirteen-year-old girl, who had never been an enthusiastic reader, became so interested in the

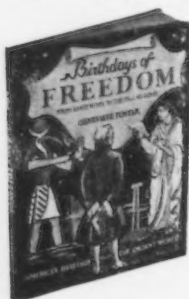
patriots of the War of Independence and in their wives, that during the five week summer session she read a biography of Patrick Henry, one of Alexander Hamilton's wife, two of Thomas Jefferson, and one book about Jefferson's daughter. A twelve-year-old boy read Ludwig's *Napoleon* to satisfy his curiosity about the career of the "Little Corporal." Some excellent creative writing was produced, including a sketch about Mozart, written as though by a contemporary. As an outcome of the unit, the group produced in their dramatics class a series of dramatizations of the time of Washington, solving several unusual stage production problems in their efforts to have a series of three or four scenes taking place at the same time. Background scenery was painted in the art class periods. The result was a rich sampling of George Washington's world, each participant choosing his own particular person and scene of interest, and his channel of expression.



It is the wealth of material to appeal to so many varied interests of young people, while exploring history, that is the source of one of the great values of Mrs. Foster's writings. Materials from the fields of science, music, painting, archeology, are all included, and open up many new fields of interest.

As further evidence that the "World" books offer riches for all readers, Mrs. Foster has described the use of the books as a background for the development of a program called *In My Father's World*, in a

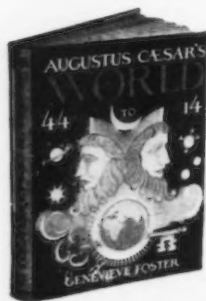
school where the majority of pupils came from homes in which were first or second-generation Americans, and which represented many rich national cultures. With



their parents' help they put together a broad picture of what life was like, and what history was taking place in the many countries represented by their family's experiences.

Genevieve Foster states that the writing of the "World" books grew out of her own desire to develop an understanding of history. She had always found the subject matter of history to be a vast, unnavigable sea of people, dates, wars, and nations. But, standing above the sea most clearly were the people, always, and it seemed to Mrs. Foster that these must be the most recognizable landmarks to all readers. She felt that it ought to be possible to relate the course of events over the world to the things that happened to one personality whose career touched many of the significant happenings. For, after all, as Mrs. Foster pointed out, this is the way we look back over the contemporary history which has touched our own lives. She remembers the launch that came across the lake to the boat dock on which she sat, dangling her feet in the water, bringing the news that war had broken out in Europe in 1914. In like manner, most adults undoubtedly remember exactly what they were doing on the Sunday afternoon of December 7th, 1941, when the broadcast concert of the Philharmonic Orchestra was interrupted to announce that Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

Mrs. Foster's inspiration to develop this technique in writing history was strengthened by noting the enthusiasm with which her daughter, Joanna, discovered a comparison between the costumes worn in the movie, *Catherine the Great*, and those in the history she was at the time reading about George Washington. Joanna tugged at her mother's sleeve with the question, "Did this Queen live at the same time as George Washington?" and Mrs. Foster was not certain herself, until they had returned home to do some reference work. But she had found her clue to a method for making history more meaningful.



Abraham Lincoln's World was the most difficult to write, Mrs. Foster acknowledged, even as it is the most difficult for children to read. This is understandable when one considers the many upheavals in nationalistic spirit and economics and social change that were breaking the surface of the stream of world history in the period marked by the life of Abraham Lincoln.

Possessing the profound respect for order and accuracy which is a prime requisite for a historian, Genevieve Foster laid the groundwork for each of the three "World" books in a series of chronological charts, wonderfully fascinating and exciting outlines of what was happening around the world, and how, where, and why each event touched the life of the character from whose point of view this particular segment of time is being considered. Hav-

ing this great wealth of interesting material spread and organized, the author recreated the life of her main character, pulling in the strands of contemporary lives and events in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, and weaving them precisely, with a style reflecting her originality



and vision. Thus she produced a panoramic tapestry of the worlds of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Augustus Caesar. There is excitement, humor, and great fascination in Genevieve Foster's writing.

It is the good fortune of younger readers than the eleven to fifteen-year-old group who form the best audience for the "World" books, that Mrs. Foster's publishers persuaded her to use her research and skill to fill one of the great gaps in children's literature—the well-written, simple biography. The series has been called the Initial biographies.

Mrs. Foster has written the four Initial biographies as introductions to the characters and careers of the four men whose life spans encompassed most our country's history: George Washington, leader in the struggle for Independence and in the first years of the existence of the nation; Andrew Jackson, a part of the great movements of expansion; Abraham Lincoln, who was born only 9 years after Washington's death and piloted the nation through its great test of disunion; and Theodore Roosevelt, who saw Lincoln's funeral train as a boy, and was a leader of the new era

and the new century of "growing up" of the United States. The task of writing a brief, introductory biography of George Washington, which was the first of this series, intrigued the author with the demand for extracting from the mass of material which she had collected in the three years' task of writing *George Washington's World*—the essence, so to speak, of the hero's life. She says she was encouraged as she thought of the challenge faced by Mme. Marie Curie as she reduced the carload of pitchblende before she extracted a tiny bit of precious radium. Mrs. Foster achieved a compactly written, interesting, and historically sound biography of Washington, which, while it is simplified, is never "written down"; and she has kept up that high standard in the three following biographies: *Abraham Lincoln* (1950), *Andrew Jackson* (1951), and *Theodore Roosevelt* (1954).

Since the text of each brief biography had to be so distilled to the essential facts, it seemed important that every facet of the presentation should add something to the reader's conception of the character and his life story. The style of writing, sentence length, dialogue, and vocabulary all were



viewed as tools by the author, to be used in the telling of the story. Thus, she chose to write of George Washington in a quiet style, with little dialogue, because he was a quiet man. The style of *Abraham Lin-*

coln mirrors something of the slow tempo of the period, and of the deliberate quality of its hero. *Andrew Jackson* is written in a staccato style, characteristic of the explo-

Theodore Roosevelt—page 1-2) What a wonderful day! It was October 27, 1865. And he, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., who lived at 28 East 20th Street, New York City, was now seven years old. This was his birthday!

The small pale boy sat up long after he had gone to bed, his arms about his knees, thinking it all over. Soft night air gently moved the curtains in the tall nursery window, at his side. In the quiet hall below he heard the clock strike half past eleven.

Some nights, he heard it strike every single hour, nights when he was sick with asthma and could hardly breathe.

A third factor which is a carrier of information in these brief biographies is that of illustration. Mrs. Foster has made the pictures always supplementary to the textual descriptions. Her aim has been to produce pictures which would give an idea of the life of the subject to a child looking at the book, even if he could not read a word. Teachers and librarians will always be grateful to Mrs. Foster for the double-page illustration in *George Washington* which shows a cross-section of the home at Mt. Vernon, giving the arrangement of rooms in the great plantation home.

The illustrations and the design of the books of Genevieve Foster are never an after-thought to the next, because Mrs. Foster is artist as well as writer. She sees each page in its completeness of text, illustration, and design. The illustrations and the page layout are conceived as the text is growing, and Mrs. Foster produces the entire design for each of her volumes, doing the color separation for each illustration herself.

International recognition has been awarded Mrs. Foster for the important contribution she has made to literature for children in the fields of biography and his-

tory, and for the interpretation of American history in its relation to world history. *Abraham Lincoln's World* was chosen to go into the CARE packages of books to be sent to schools and libraries abroad. Translations of the "World" books and of the Initial biographies have been made into many foreign languages. Recently, Mrs. Foster has had copies of editions which have been made in French, Greek, Urdu, Bengali, and Arabic languages, and has received word that translations are being made into Turkish and Hebrew. In a world beset with misunderstandings between nations, it is encouraging to know that new generations will have these excellent writings about America, produced by a craftsman with sincerity and integrity, to interpret our country.

To meet Genevieve Foster, personally, is a delightful and heart-warming experience. A lovely and gracious woman, she generously shares her interest and exhilaration in her work. A most charming introduction to her was written by her daughter, Joanna Foster, now with Harcourt Brace & Co., and published in the *Horn Book* magazine, June, 1952.

An anniversary tribute for the contribution she has made to literature for children has been truly merited by Genevieve Foster.

Books By Genevieve Foster

<i>George Washington's World</i>	Scribner, 1941
<i>Abraham Lincoln's World</i>	Scribner, 1944
<i>Augustus Caesar's World</i>	Scribner, 1947
<i>George Washington</i>	Scribner, 1949
<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>	Scribner, 1950
<i>Birthdays of Freedom</i>	Scribner, 1952
<i>Andrew Jackson</i>	Scribner, 1951
<i>Theodore Roosevelt</i>	Scribner, 1954

A Brief Look Backward

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH: CHAPTER ONE

Whether or not the teachers of the 1920's recognized it, they were helping establish an idea new in education—a conviction of the great importance of childhood, and an enthusiasm for understanding and teaching young children. This belief found expression in many ways. There were teachers like Marietta Johnson at Fairhope and Lucy Sprague Mitchell at the City and Country School. There were leaders like William H. Kilpatrick at Columbia, R. L. Lyman at the University of Chicago, Florence Bamberger at Johns Hopkins, and Sterling A. Leonard at the University of Wisconsin. There were books like Rugg's *The Child-Centered School*. There was the Progressive Education Association, founded in 1919. And there was the sudden opulence of books for children that followed the establishment by the Macmillan Company in 1919 of the first separate children's book department; the founding of Children's Book Week in the same year; and the institution of the Newbery Award by Frederic G. Melcher in 1922.

It is not hard to recreate the excitement and hopefulness of that period, for even now, a depression and two wars later, it has not abated.

It was in the spirit of those times that C. C. Certain, then Supervisor of School Libraries in Detroit, established *The Elementary English Review*,¹ and published the first issue in March, 1924.

Some idea of the need for a magazine devoted to the interests of English teachers in elementary schools may be gained from the programs of the National Council of Teachers of English in the early years of the 1920's. In 1920 and again in 1925 the programs make no mention of elementary English. In 1922, there were two joint meetings on elementary and junior high school English; in 1923, normal and ele-

mentary were combined; in 1924, elementary and junior high were paired again. One may assume that there was in the Council, as elsewhere, interest in the education of young children, but that it was unorganized, lacking a nucleus and a means of expression. *The Elementary English Review* was to supply both.

The prospectus of the new journal stated that among the outstanding features there would be: "Articles by educational authorities discussing principles basic to the teaching of English in elementary schools; articles by classroom teachers setting forth their practical experiences in the solution of difficult problems; articles outlining co-operative experiments based upon scientific research; articles discussing prominent writers of the day in the field of children's literature; articles discussing artists prominent as illustrators of children's books." If these promises do not seem in any way strange or dated to readers of this issue, it is because the policies are still carried out in *Elementary English*.

The new magazine had an impressive board of advisers, and for a generation that may not know them, I give their names: great teachers, every one, and men and women of vigorous minds and honest devotion to their profession.

H. W. Wilson, Superintendent of Schools, Berkeley, California.

Theda Gildemeister, Winona State Teachers College, Winona, Minnesota.

Sterling A. Leonard, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

Clara Beverley, Supervisor of English, Detroit Public Schools.

Orton Lowe, Director of English, Department of Public Instruction, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Mary A. S. Mugan, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Fall River, Massachusetts.

¹The name was changed to ELEMENTARY ENGLISH in 1947.

Florence E. Bamberger, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.

A. J. Cloud, Chief Deputy Superintendent of Schools, San Francisco, California.

R. L. Lyman, University of Chicago.

W. W. Hatfield, Secretary, National Council of Teachers of English.

Charles S. Pendleton, The George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee.

Mrs. L. M. Russell, Supervisor of Intermediate Grades, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

James M. Grainger, State Normal School, Farmville, Virginia.

Patty Smith Hill, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Walter Barnes, Fairmont State Normal School, Fairmont, West Virginia.

Volume I, later to become a collector's item (one ivy-league college offering \$10.00 for a copy) contained some illustrious names. The lead article of the first issue, by Sterling A. Leonard, was entitled "Teaching Literature for a Fuller Experience." R. L. Lyman, Guy T. Buswell, C. R. Rounds, Hugh Lofting (winner of a Newbery Award for his *Voyages of Dr. Dolittle*), Hendrik Willem Van Loon (another Newbery winner), and Padraic Colum were all contributors.

The temptation to name authors is strong. Some of them were, and still are, well known—Frederick S. Breed, Ernest Horn, L. J. Brueckner. Others, recognized leaders today, made their initial appearance in print in *The Review*; the professional recognition and advancement of a contributor occasioned an almost paternal pride on the part of the editor who, genuine teacher that he was, delighted to watch people grow and develop.

One of the outstanding early numbers was that issued in May, 1932, in memory of Vachel Lindsay. Edwin Arlington Robinson, Frederic G. Melcher, Hazelton Spencer, William Cabell Greet, Witter Bynner, and George M. Richards were among the distinguished writers and artists who paid tribute to the poet who wrote so charmingly for children.

Research as a means of guiding teaching

methods, selecting instructional materials, and setting educational policies was attracting more and more interest in the 1920's and 30's. Would it not be helpful if those interested in the scientific and statistical study of needs in English education could meet and discuss findings and agree upon needed research? C. C. Certain thought that it would be, and in 1933, at the meeting of the American Association of School Administrators (then known as the Department of Superintendence) he called together the first Conference on Research in Elementary School English.² There was a close, though informal relation between the Conference and *The Review*. The papers issued by the Conference in its *Annual Research Bulletins* were preprints from *The Review*; by this device, the project was able to survive on a depression shoestring.

Although the magazine was the personal undertaking of C. C. Certain (and remained so until his death in 1940), it was accepted as an official organ of the National Council of Teachers of English about 1928 (I regret that I cannot establish the date exactly). Sterling A. Leonard and C. C. Fries were largely responsible for the change to official status. The new arrangement made it possible for a Council member to receive the periodical as part of his membership fee.

While *The Review* was for seventeen years the "lengthened shadow of one man," it was just as truly the expression of the beliefs, work, hopes, problems, and triumphs of many teachers; it could not otherwise have survived and flourished. It was a labor of love all around; neither editor nor associate editor received any salary, and the contributors were just that—contributors. C. C. Certain was well aware of the quality of their generous enthusiasm, and regarded the magazine as a cooperative undertaking. In the first chapter of its history, which terminated in 1942 when the magazine was taken over by the National Council of Teachers of English, *The Review* showed itself to be a

²The name was changed to Conference on Research in English in 1937.

nursery of ideas. It helped develop a better understanding of children and their educational needs, and it gave elementary school teachers a

sense of vocation. It continues to do so under the direction of the Council. Chapter two should be a brilliant one.

BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE ELEMENTARY SECTION

W. WILBUR HATFIELD

The National Council of Teachers of English was organized at an invitation meeting in Chicago during the Thanksgiving weekend of 1911.¹ Although the chief immediate cause of the movement was the rebellion of the high school teachers of English against what they felt was the limiting domination of the college entrance requirements, several persons concerned with the work of the elementary school were there, and the need for articulation between the elementary and high schools was pointed out in the discussions. James F. Hosis, the leader in the organization, was at the time engaged in training elementary teachers for the city of Chicago.

At the second Annual Meeting of the Council (1912), there was an Elementary Section meeting parallel to those for the high school and college. Then, and for many years, there was no section in the sense of an organized group within the Council.

The *English Journal* in those early days tried to serve all levels; it usually carried in each issue one article for elementary teachers and one for college men. This widespread and thin coverage was felt by the editor of the *Journal* and some others to be unsatisfactory. C. C. Certain was among those who shared this feeling, and in 1924 he founded the *Elementary English Review*, now called *Elementary English*.

The founding of the *Review* naturally led to desire for a branch of the Council which would give strong support to that magazine, and Elementary Section chairmen were appointed, but their duties and authority were undefined. Nonetheless the desire for vigorous Council activity in the elementary field grew and was one of the reasons for the complete overhauling of the Council constitution in 1944. Since 1944

the Council has had an Elementary Section Committee elected by mail ballot of the members of the Section, and this Committee chooses one of its members to be its chairman and chairman of the Section. The Section Chairman is *ex officio* a member of the Executive Committee of the Council.

These Section Committees—whose successive chairmen have been Dora V. Smith, Ruth G. Strickland, Hannah M. Lindahl, and Mildred Dawson—have suggested the appointment of several committees which have produced Council publications dealing with English in the elementary school. They have also pushed energetically the enrollment of elementary members of the Council. Edna L. Sterling is the present chairman of the Section, and will doubtless tell of present activities in this or an early issue of *Elementary English*.

The earliest of the Council publications stimulated by the Elementary Section was *Reading for Fun*, edited by Eloise Ramsey of Detroit and elaborately illustrated. This was eventually succeeded by the present admirable *Adventuring with Books*, edited by Margaret M. Clark, of the Cleveland Public Library. Then there was *Children Learn to Write*, edited by Fannie J. Ragland, of Cincinnati, sold out long ago, and still awaiting revision before being reprinted. Next came *Children Learn to Read*, edited by C. DeWitt Boney, of New York. The reprints from *Elementary English (Review)*, beginning with the *Policies and Practices in the Improvement of Reading*, a series of papers with which Dr. DeBoer inaugurated his editorship, have been numerous and important, but they should be part of the story of the magazine.

The Elementary Section and its magazine have come a long way, and their prospects are

bright. Almost all elementary school teachers have class hours devoted to English or language arts, as well as teach English all day. But the necessity of attending to several subjects keeps them from concentrating on English—and from joining the NCTE. That 2500 of them do be-

long to the Council is fine; that 5000 schools have non-member subscriptions to *Elementary English* is even more heartening. The quality of the Section leadership and the size and quality of the magazine augur increase in both memberships and non-member subscriptions.

Unsolved Problems in Reading: A Symposium I

By Emmett Albert Betts:¹

For many years it has been relatively easy to sell legislators on the value of research in agriculture. For example, they are provided with specific data to prove that certain researches have increased the crop yield by so many bushels an acre. Or, they can readily understand the value of diet and conditions that shorten the time in preparing livestock for market. Likewise, both industrial and labor leaders can be given concrete evidence on the value of research in selecting the right person for the right job or improving the status of employees. Right now, for example, reading improvement programs are offered to management officers in most of the major industries.

In the past, there have been few, if any, appropriations by legislative bodies for research to improve reading instruction. Undoubtedly, the bulk of research in this area has been done by candidates for master's and doctor's degrees and by independent workers. In fact, the U.S. Office of Education even suspended the publication of Ruth A. Gray's *Bibliography of Research Studies in Education* after 1941. In spite of the fact that organizations such as the National Conference on Research in English have taken official action to request the continuation of this publication, no funds have been appropriated for this purpose. There appears to be a need for cooperative action in order to

improve reading instruction through research. This is one of the major unsolved problems in reading.

Recently several books and magazine articles have offered the public a variety of *opinions* about what is wrong with reading instruction rather than what is right. Some of these opinions were slanted statements by those who had an ax to grind. Other opinions were given out by both reporters and professional educators to alert parents regarding their responsibilities and basic needs in schools. In many schools, educators have used these publications as a basis for obtaining parent-teacher cooperation in making a sensible evaluation of the reading program. In so far as educators take the initiative there will be scientific investigations of reading improvement programs.

Gains

More than 100 studies have been made to compare school achievement now and then. From these studies, the evidence indicates that the present generation of children is superior in the three R's to their parents and grandparents. They read more books faster and with better understanding.

On the brighter side, these gains have been made in spite of half-day sessions, overcrowded

¹Director, The Reading Clinic, Temple University, Philadelphia (22), Penna.

classrooms, emergency certification of teachers, and many other handicaps which would discourage the less persistent. Furthermore, more children are kept in school longer, increasing the complexity of the situation with the mentally retarded, emotional deviates, low achievers, and the unmotivated. In short, demonstrated gains should not be underestimated.

There is another side of this picture, however, which calls for anything but complacency: research has pointed the way to even more substantial gains. To prove that reading is taught as well or slightly better today than it was in 1939, 1924, 1905, or 1846 is a sound answer to the arbitrary pre-judgments of non-educators. On the other hand, it is also an admission that typical teaching practices are lagging behind the conclusions reached by researchers. At present enough evidence has been accumulated on language development, individual differences, word perception, concept formation, etc., to make it possible for every child to achieve in reading up to his capacity (broadly defined). Yet few, if any, can claim they have attained this goal.

Language development. One of the highly significant gains has resulted from increased information on how reading functions as a facet of language development. Listening and speaking—two facets of language—are evaluated not only as a basis for reading readiness but also as essentials in the improvement of reading skills and abilities. Furthermore, reading achievement is used as a basis for estimating readiness for the writing (especially spelling) facet of language development. In turn, learnings in spelling are used to reinforce growth in reading. This relatively recent emphasis on reading as a facet of language maintains the language integration with which the child enters school. It is a promising preventive for many reading and spelling disabilities. Moreover, it puts the emphasis on developmental rather than on corrective reading.

Individual needs. Another gain of paramount importance is the increased understand-

ing of the complexities of individual differences in reading achievement and capacity—in language and mental development. In fact, this has long been the great unsolved problem in education. A big gain has been made on the study of and the provision for individual differences in classroom situations.

Here is a list of some of the gains:

1. Better understandings have been achieved regarding the wide range of reading abilities in a class. For example, a range from zero to twelfth-grade level in reading achievement is being recognized in a typical fifth grade.

2. More than one type of grouping to meet individual needs is being used, emphasizing challenge rather than frustration for *all* pupils in a class.

3. Although more research is needed on group behavior, enough progress has been made to improve group climate significantly. These gains provide firmer foundations upon which to build differentiated reading programs.

4. Newer concepts of reading retardation are taking the "heat" off many children who achieve below the class average but who are not retarded. They also are increasing the concern over the reading retardation of those who achieve above the class average.

5. More is known about the reading needs of the gifted and more is being done for them. (At this date, however, legislation has benefited the mentally retarded far more than the gifted!)

6. Procedures have been devised for differentiating between children with corrective and remedial (dyslexias) reading needs. This approach is keeping more children in their regular classrooms and sending fewer than one per cent to clinics. (Remedial reading cases usually present problems which require analysis and follow-up in a clinic).

7. Materials have been published for low achievers who need high-interest level materials with low-readability levels.

Reading Interest. Substantial gains have

been made on the study of reading interests and how to develop them. While relatively little is known about the wide range in the maturity of interests at a given age or grade level, enough guide posts have been identified to make possible differentiated use of both basic readers for "normal" achievers and books for low achievers, including retarded readers. For example, it is now possible for an older child or adolescent who is a low achiever to read books at his interest level.

Word perception and recognition. Phonics as a recurring fad (and a current one!) is on the way out. Instead, phonics as one legitimate approach to word pronunciation is being given a "new look" as a part of basic needs in word perception and recognition. In the first place, studies of percentage of applications and exceptions for phonic rules have indicated the limits of their serviceability. Secondly, hundreds of studies of visual perception made by psychologists are being evaluated for cues to the development of word perception skills.

In short, evidence is being rapidly accumulated to put the phonics faddists on the defence. Today, the evidence is against those who advocate a "phonics" system of reading for two reasons: first, reading is far more than a word-pronouncing process; second, word perception is more than word pronunciation.

Comprehension. Only a generation ago, comprehension was discussed in terms of "sentence comprehension," "paragraph comprehension," "word meanings," etc. The emphasis was on a *literal* interpretation of what the author said; that is, on assimilative, or "sponge-type" reading.

As a result of important researches, some emphasis is being given to "what the reader *thinks* about what the author says"—that is, to *critical thinking*. For example, systematic guidance is being given on discriminating between verifiable statements (facts) and expressions of opinion (attitudes); on evaluating relevance of statements; on drawing conclusions from re-

lated facts, cause-effect relationships, and analogies. This emphasis on reading as a thinking process is reducing the amount of unproductive rote learning in classrooms.

Here is a partial list of some gains in the teaching of reading as a thinking process:

1. Research on the psychology of thinking has been critically evaluated and interpreted. (See Vinacke; Humphrey)

2. Evidence favors the proposition that learning how to think in a reading situation is a result of specific guidance and does not necessarily accrue as a by-product of a reading-study activity.

3. The effect of attitudes on reading comprehension has been brought into clearer focus, emphasizing the need for an inventory of individual and group attitudes before reading a selection.

4. The effect of group processes on individual attitudes and judgments has been demonstrated.

5. Semantics has been structured as only one dimension of language, the other two dimensions embracing syntactics and pragmatics. (The work of Ogden and Richards and of Korzybski has been trumped by Charles Morris and his colleagues)

6. Psychologists have given teachers more information on (a) the development of the ability to make concepts, (b) what concepts, or patterns of concepts, a child has at a given age or grade level, and (c) how a child learns a specific concept. (Since concepts, not words are the materials of reading, this information can be used to put word perception on a sound basis as well as to prevent verbalism.)

7. Beginnings have been made on the study of concept load as well as language and typographical factors in readability.

Unsolved Problems

Any listing of gains in the improvement of reading instruction may be misleading. To the beginner, such a list may give the false impression that there is not much more to be in-

vestigated. This opinion, of course, is far from the truth. In fact, the serious student is almost frustrated by the abundance of statements of opinion and the paucity of statements of facts in the literature.

Much of the research on reading has been of the normative, or status-quo, type. For example, a great deal is known about which words children misspell but not about how well they could learn to spell under certain conditions. Considerable information is available on commonness of certain types of phonic and structural elements in selected vocabulary lists but very little is known about the learning of perceptual skills involving these groupings of letters. A few studies have been made on children's concepts of time, place, etc., and on ability to draw conclusions, but more information is needed on their ability to conceptualize and how they make specific concepts. Therefore, one of the unsolved problems is how to stimulate more *experimental* research, which often exceeds the limitations of masters' theses and doctoral dissertations.

Another major problem is the time lag between a research report and the modification of classroom practices. For example, considerable information has been obtained on individual differences, word perception, and reading as a thinking process, but too often 1860 concepts appear to be used in classrooms. In the first place, there appears to be a need for carefully considered *critiques*, rather than a mere summarizing of research in order to identify valid conclusions and implications. Secondly, there appears to be a need for collaboration between the researchers and the "journalists" in psychology and education. There is too little evidence of an interest in solving the problem at either state or national levels.

Within the limitations of this article, the following problems are listed:

1. A procedure for estimating the loading of emotional aberrations in reading disability cases.

2. A procedure to estimate concept load as a factor in readability for different age level groups.

3. A validation of criteria used for the derivation of readability formulas.

4. A group test for measuring the reading capacity of low achievers, including retarded readers.

5. An evaluation of the relative effectiveness of basic reading systems.

6. A study of the ranges of reading interests at succeeding age levels.

7. A study of the perception and recognition values of words.

8. A validation of scores obtained from different types of standardized reading tests.

9. A technique for estimating total reading vocabulary of pupils who achieve at different "reader" levels.

10. A battery of associative learning, memory span, and related tests for screening out dyslexias.

11. Experimental evaluation of materials used for biblioprophyllaxis or for bibliotherapy.

12. Experimental study of the roles of need, meaning, and grouping of word elements (auditory and visual) in visual perception and recognition of words.

13. A psychological study of the sequence in the development of word perception and recognition skills.

14. Experimental study of the role of perceptual and conceptual cognition in readiness for reading.

15. Experimental evaluation of the sequence of language development, especially during middle childhood and adolescence.

16. A battery of tests for identifying specific comprehension needs, especially in the ability to do critical thinking.

17. A study of the ability of different age groups to deal with different levels of verbal abstraction.

18. A survey study of the repertory of concepts possessed by different age groups.

19. An experimental study of the ability to make certain types of concepts at different age levels.

20. A study of children's ability to interpret different types of language situations (e.g. metaphors, punctuation, etc.)

21. A study of the meaning vocabularies

of children at different age levels.

22. A study of the relationship between personality factors and reading achievement.

23. A study of professional concepts of teachers who use different teaching practices with different successes.

By E. W. Dolch:¹

We are all accustomed to hear the complaint that while the physical sciences have progressed enormously, the social sciences are still in the trial and error stage. It is said that in the physical sciences, they study their materials and standardize them, they experiment with their formulae, they record results accurately, and so they make great strides. Now if only the social sciences, of which Education is one, would do the same, we would have equal progress.

All such reasoning sounds very good to most persons, but the writer will never forget the time that he happened to see the same reading lesson taught by two different teachers. He saw all of the lesson in one school, went to the second school, and it so happened that the teacher had exactly the same story and the same pages before the children. In fact, the teachers said exactly the same things, asked exactly the same questions, and so on. They were of course doing just what the manual told them to do. But what a difference in the result! Note that here we had in each case the same educational formula; teacher, book, method, and pupils. But the teacher was the "variable element." In one room, she was full of imagination, she was "in the story," and the children were too. In the other, the teacher obviously thought the whole thing pretty silly, and the children thought so too and were bored to death. In these two rooms, presumably the same educational formula was being used. But it was not the same formula. One element had varied enormously, and the results were almost the opposite of one another.

Some superintendents, curriculum experts, and supervisors do have their educational for-

mulae worked out to a fine point. As you talk with them in the office, you see just how everything is to be done and you can foresee only the desired result. But what about the "variable element," the teacher? Recently a publisher was telling of his efforts to get certain material on sounding. He found a teacher who had devised material and was getting remarkable results with it. But the publisher was cautious. He reproduced the material and had other teachers try it. It was a complete failure. And the publisher said he had done this same thing three times with different authors, but always with the same result. The formula, teacher-material-method-pupil, worked wonderfully when the teacher was the one who had devised the material. It failed when she was not.

It is for this reason that the supervisor, who, of course, should be an educational scientist if anyone is, makes certain suggestions to one teacher and makes other suggestions to others. Then she makes no suggestions to some teachers but only asks questions from time to time. And perhaps she says nothing at all to still other teachers. She does have in her mind a beautiful formula, teacher-material-method-pupil, but she knows full well about the "variable element," the teacher. Perhaps the best the supervisor can do is to get teachers *interested* in new materials and methods. She can get them willing or eager to "try" such things. She does not want a trial under protest, for, as salesmen have found out in selling material "on trial," poor results are almost certain. The supervisor

¹Professor-emeritus of Education, the University of Illinois.

is working with a "variable element," and she wants that element to vary only in the right direction.

Educational experimenters have long known that when they use two groups of children with different teachers, there will be no convincing comparisons because of the "variable element" in the teacher. So experimenters have often used the device of having the same teacher teach different groups or have her use different methods with the same group. Thus, they say, they have "eliminated this variable." But have they? What they may get in one formula of "teacher-material-method-pupil" is "enthusiastic teacher," and in their second formula they may get "skeptical teacher," and these may still be the same person. So whenever, in any educational plan, such as the teaching of reading, we have the teacher as one element we need to have a "willing, understanding teacher," or the plan will not work. If instead, we have, as is so often the case, an "unwilling teacher," or a "misunderstanding teacher," or the like, the best plan under the sun will not work. Publishers know this and do everything in their power to enlist the enthusiasm of the teacher and to see that she knows just why she is doing what she is doing. School administrators often lose sight of this fact and "issue directives" which are to be "carried out in the all schools." The results are then seldom what they expect.

In the educational formula of "teacher-material-method-pupil," there is of course a second variable. That is the pupil. In the past we have tried to "specify" him as to sex, age, I.Q., test scores, and so on. Now we are beginning to specify him further as to "socially adjusted," "verbal type," "extrovert," and so on. But do the best we can, he is a wonderfully "variable element" in the formula. That is why the best teachers in the world, the best materials in the world, the best methods in the world, still have failures.

In the past, this occasional failure of our best planning has made us angry, and we have

taken that anger out on the pupil. We have said that he caused the failure because he was dumb, or lazy, or resentful, and so on. We say that he did not fit the formula. Instead, let us say that the formula did not fit him. The writer, in working with many hundreds of children individually, has come to consider as most important indeed, this "variable element," the pupil. Of course, in the teaching of reading we know the materials and methods quite well. Then we must become fully acquainted with the particular teacher. Then we study the child. As a result, we then work out with the teacher a formula which seems to promise success, that is, progress in reading. But then, before work begins, we make the same caution to the teacher that doctor does to a nurse. He will say, "Try this method, but if you should detect unfavorable reaction, immediately switch to this other." That is, we warn the teacher to look out for any unfavorable result of the particular formula, and tell her just what to do at once if that should happen. Often we suggest an immediate switch to easy interesting reading, or to a well-liked game, so as to gain time to reconsider the situation and make out another and better formula. We do not "drive home" a plan regardless of the "variable element," the pupil.

It is a delight to watch the skilled teacher doing the same thing with a whole class of children. She will have her lesson plan, which is what she imagined would happen. But as she catches a wrong reaction, you will see her swiftly shift her plan or her ground. Even when she asks a single pupil a question, she may sense the wrong action and immediately reword the question or shift to something else. A formula the teacher has in her mind is not judged by its logical excellence but by how it works with the children. The teacher is the one who is watching the "variable element," the pupil, and the better teacher she is, the quicker she makes allowance for unforeseen reactions.

In our educational formula, we of course have other variables. One is "the parent."

Usually, the person who does not know a particular parent assumes he or she is the "standard parent." But how many parents are such? And any fine educational formula for the teaching of reading or of anything else can be made to fail by this often hidden element, "the parent."

The pupil is also always "a member of a group." But what kind of a group? Is it a group for mischief or for cooperation, for personal satisfaction or for some school purpose? And "member" may mean many things, from "leader" to "hanger-on." So if the group problem is a part of our formula, here is another most important "variable element."

To return to our first question, why does not education make great strides as do chemistry and physics and the other physical sciences? Why do we not "study our materials and standardize them," "experiment with different formulae and discover just what each will do" and

so on? Why indeed?

A while ago a very prominent doctor, a wise leader in his profession, made this statement: "Experimentation will never take the place of careful, critical observation." In education, and especially in reading, we will experiment just as far as we can. But we will realize that experiment alone will not solve our problems. We must continually exercise "careful, critical observation" of what goes on in this teaching-learning process. And in this observation, we will always be watching the "variable elements," especially the teacher and the pupil. We will never try to override them. We will never ignore them. We will never lose patience with them. They are a part of our formula: "teacher-material-method-pupil." We want to know how that formula works so that we can rely upon it or change it. And so we will watch our variable elements, and always make allowance for any variation.

By Arthur I. Gates:¹

Although there is a great need for research in all basal aspects of reading, considerable space will be given in this article to consideration of what may seem to be primarily practical problems. The reason for this is that the development of the whole program in the teaching of reading depends upon our knowing how practices, suggested by basal research, are working out in typical school situations. The direction of basal research in the future should be determined in considerable measure by facts concerning the values of practical operations in the current scene.

The use of visual and auditory aids has increased by leaps and bounds in the last decade. The relative values of the different media are far from clear. Research in the field of reading and of other media is being largely done by specialists in one field, some of whom are perhaps subject to a degree of bias. There is a shortage of critical studies made by persons with

no axe to grind in which the relative contributions of the different media can be properly and fairly appraised. There are too few who devote themselves, not primarily to one medium or another, but to the development of the most fruitful combination or coordination of the different media of learning.

This leads to the next suggestion for research.

The development of visual-auditory aids, picture books, picture magazines, demonstration devices, television, radio and the movies, means that reading now as never before is up against some very severe competition for the pupils' free time and interest. Some of us believe that reading can be developed to high levels of expertness only when a child does a good deal of reading apart from that required in school.

Both in school and elsewhere the demand

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today is for more flexible, more finished, more expert, more subtle forms of reading than were developed a generation ago. To illustrate: newspapers are now available not only for adults but for children in greater number than ever. It requires a high level of skill quickly and efficiently to skim and scan a newspaper to find out what is of importance or of high interest. A generation ago many children, now adults among us, did not acquire these skills very well, and either went through life without them, or got them by dint of extensive reading outside of school hours.

Somehow or other more skill in teaching must be provided in order to achieve the desired high levels. If children do not find that they can get more information and more enjoyment and can satisfy their needs through reading better than by listening to radio, or TV, or studying pictures or observing demonstrations, or listening to people talk, they will begin to do less reading, with the result that higher level skills will not be acquired, or if acquired, they will gradually decline from disuse. These considerations suggest the importance of research on the development of the higher levels of reading through more astute and skillful management within the school or some combination of improved instruction within the school and activities carried on voluntarily or with the cooperation of adults outside of the school.

To a considerable extent, basal reading skills can and should be developed in the so-called "basal course" by the classroom teacher, during the elementary and intermediate grades. Among basal skills are the following: skill in working out the recognition, pronunciation, and meaning of words; skill in using context clues to enable one to get the pronunciation and meaning of words as well as connected material in the course of reading; skill in reading at rates varying from extremely slow pace at the one extreme, to a skipping and scanning procedure in which as many as a thousand words can be covered in a minute, and at all intervening

rates; skills in reading for different degrees of thoroughness; skill in reviewing for the purpose of learning material by heart, or of picking out the salient and significant principles or facts sufficiently well to recall them later; skills involved in freeing the mind during the course of reading so that the reader may appraise, evaluate, judge, or otherwise think during the process.

There is not as yet clear evidence concerning the extent to which such basal skills are adequate to meet all the reading needs of the special subjects, such as the social studies, physics, mathematics, shop work, and the like or of many out-of-school vocational tasks. Certain instructors of the special subjects seem to believe that the teacher of the basal reading program is responsible for all phases of reading, and that if reading is well taught, difficulties and defects will not show up in the special subjects. The evidence suggests that this is not the case. The teacher of the basal reading course cannot give the child all the adaptations, all the specialized phases of techniques, all the valuable combinations of different procedures, all the general strategies of attacks which are essential for expert learning in physics or mathematics or the social studies or other areas. It is not altogether clear, however, just how the various teachers are to cooperate. Certain skills can probably be more effectively and realistically developed in the teaching of special subjects than in the basal reading program. But it is not clear just when and in what way and to what extent the teachers of the special subjects should participate. There is need for research on those adaptations and specializations of reading required to cover the full range of learning in school subjects and elsewhere and to discover the most effective cooperative procedures of basal teachers and special subject matter teachers to achieve high levels of competence.

There is increasing evidence that instruction in the past has depended too much on the teacher's activity in teaching every stage of reading and too little on the pupils' learning how to

help themselves learn to read. This evidence has perhaps been most clearly portrayed by achievements of some of the better reading specialists in working with individual cases. Many of the shrewdest of these persons have found, for example, that it is possible to demonstrate in the early grades, often as early as the first grade, how a competent person goes about the business of working out the pronunciation and recognition of an unfamiliar word in such a way that children are able to go ahead on their own. Children can learn to spot the techniques, to rationalize and talk about them and point them out to each other. It has been found that they are challenged by and delighted with the whole procedure of taking upon themselves the responsibility for helping themselves and others in the development of the insights and skills which enable them to read better. There is a vast difference between teaching a pupil *how to be taught* in a typical classroom, on the one hand, and teaching him *how to learn* by himself, on the other. It is possible furthermore to teach children how to help other children learn by themselves. Often a group of children working together, telling each other about their procedures, their hunches, pointing out each other's faults, turns out to be one of the most helpful as well as teacher time-saving devices yet discovered. There is great need of research to plumb the possibilities of furthering this type of teaching and learning.

We have less than complete information concerning how best to adjust instruction in the teaching of reading to the wide range and variety of individual needs found in a typical classroom. Reading is one of those activities so subtle that the learner requires, in most cases, a good deal of individual guidance. If teachers could instruct children one at a time, face to face, there would probably be relatively few reading failures. At least this would be true of those teachers who have a reasonable amount of insight concerning children as individuals and the techniques of teaching reading. The

typical classroom, however, remains large and seems to be getting larger. The range of intellectual and other abilities found in the class is increasing rather than decreasing. Many teachers are becoming discouraged concerning the possibility of individualizing instruction.

Although a number of precedures have been suggested, such as sub-grouping plans of various sorts, the use of individual self-teaching materials, the employment of various free-time projects, etc., most teachers find it difficult to work with the individual child as much as she would like. The researchers and theorists in the teaching of reading are far from certain how best to advise teachers to proceed. Most of us make plenty of criticisms of group instruction and heartily approve of individualized procedures, but are unable fully to describe a procedure that embodies the principles we so stoutly uphold. There is need for research on different varieties or combinations of procedures which a typical teacher can profitably employ in a typical classroom.

The current tendency in schools is to delay the introduction of instruction in reading until the youngster has achieved a certain level of "reading readiness." Some children do not begin to learn to read until they have been in school a half year or longer. Certain factors suggest both the possibility and the advisability of helping a child to learn to read long before the sixth year, indeed, perhaps during the fourth year. A few of these will be briefly noted.

Children learn to understand spoken English and to use it long before the sixth birthday. As pointed out above, children are getting an increasing amount of experience with picture books, comics, radio, television, sound-motion pictures, and other visual-auditory devices almost from infancy. The result of this is that children are well advanced in getting information and stories of all kinds long before they learn to read. The difficulties of teaching reading to a large class are so great that the average child learns rather slowly. By the end of the first

grade the typical child cannot read material anywhere nearly as complex as he can secure through other media. This puts reading at a very great disadvantage.

There are, on the other hand, factors which suggest that most children could learn to read in their fourth year. They learn to understand spoken language quite well by their second year, and psychologically there is little difference between learning, as it were, "to read" spoken words and learning to read printed words. Spoken words come to the child through sound waves, and printed words through light waves. The main reason they learn to understand spoken words first is merely that it is more convenient for parents and others to use them than to present printed material. As far as the present writer is aware there is no evidence that printed words are more difficult to perceive or distinguish than spoken words. It is frequently stated that the visual task of perceiving printed words is a rather formidable one until the sixth year or later. The fact of the matter, however, is that children, even earlier than their fourth birthday, are busily active in recognizing all sorts of things, insects, trinkets, and innumerable other small objects and complex animal faces, flowers and objects which, when observed from a distance, throw on the retina images as intricate and as small as do words in primer type seen at the conventional reading distance. As a matter of fact, many children do learn to read before the fourth birthday. If it is urged that this is not easy, the rejoinder is that it is an exceedingly complex task for children to learn to understand spoken English and to speak it, but they are deeply interested and successful in their efforts to do so. The fact that children have already a good command of oral and spoken language at the age of four should make it relatively easy to learn to read.

If children are to learn to read at an earlier age, there seems little doubt that methods and

materials different from those commonly used in the first grade should be employed. Modern facilities for printing, however, make it theoretically possible to provide an abundance of materials which would enable a child who can receive a bit of shrewd guidance, largely to learn to read by himself. This has, in fact, been done with many young children and some seriously handicapped children, such as deaf children who have no familiarity with language in any form. At any rate, the theoretical considerations suggest the advisability of a reconsideration of the whole problem of the optimum time of introducing children to reading. They imply a real possibility that children could learn readily and with great enjoyment to read quite well before the age of six. The practical situation in our American culture suggests strongly that the possibility of the advantages and the feasibility of such a plan be carefully explored by research.

The writer has seen and heard the history of many children who learned to read between the third and fifth year. During this period, which the late Professor Leta S. Hollingworth referred to as "the Golden Age of the Intellect," children seem to get the keenest of enjoyment from reading. The "quiet hour" for reading daily is a richly rewarding experience for the child and a joy to the parents.

Readers of this article may feel that the writer's comments on the difficulties of learning to read in the first grade are hardly in harmony with the suggestion that children learn to read earlier. The reader is reminded that the difficulties and confusions attending the new and strange group life, the necessity of learning in a distracting group situation, the teacher's difficulty in giving each child much quiet individual guidance and the meagreness of the content of what a child can read in the first grade in comparison with what he can get from spoken words and pictures may comprise greater handicaps than those attending easy-going guidance and self-employment at a younger age.

By David H. Russell:¹

Studies in the effects of reading are the present no man's land of this large domain in the language arts area. Since at least the 1880's, starting with Javal and Cattell, the psychology of the reading act has been charted with considerable care. Beginning a little later, the problems of reading behavior and instruction have been explored and analyzed by Buswell, Dearborn, Gates, Gray, McKee, Thorndike, and by their students and other workers. It is in the third large area, the investigation of the effects of reading, that large unknown regions and unmapped territories exist today.

The volume of research in the psychology and teaching of reading is attested in many texts and in summaries such as those of Betts, Traxler, and Witty. Gray's annual summaries of worthwhile reading studies currently include about one hundred items each year. Betts' bibliography (2) listed 8,278 studies and articles up through 1942, and the flood has continued almost unabated since then. A search of these sources, however, reveals practically no mention of serious investigation of the effects of reading. We know what eye movements in reading are like, the probable causes of reading disabilities, how children attack new or partly known words, some reasonable expectancies for reading abilities as children progress through school, but we don't know the results or effects of their reading. Can reading good books counteract living in a slum? Are the comics as bad as some people say? What happens to a child when he reads a fairy story? Does a tale of courage help a timid child to develop some courage of his own? These and many other specific questions about the effects of reading remain largely unanswered.

There are valid reasons for this neglect of an important area. The teacher concerned with thirty or even thirty-five children necessarily concentrates on the process, not the product. She and the children in the group are happy if

Jim makes no mistakes on his page or if Jake learns one difference between long and short vowels. In the busy day there isn't too much time for reading in relationship to values and ideals or to mysterious needs. So too with the principal. The score on the reading test may count heavily here. Even the school psychologist, who may have considerable insight into the effects of reading on personality, is often called in only to diagnose difficulties and outline a program of remedial instruction. Parents are not trained to look for deeper effects, librarians are busy keeping up with the new books, and school people are necessarily occupied with some of the more obvious results of their reading program. The reasons for school neglect are many but why have other research workers neglected this important area?

A second reason for avoidance of the topic, this time by skilled researchers, is the complexity of the task. Teachers freed from some class routines, graduate students and university people have not always asked and studied the important questions. In a subtle, complex task like reading many factors influence outcomes and it is rarely possible to discover one immediate effect linked to a single cause. Because the process and the effects are complicated, there has been neglect by most investigators in the field.

Studies of the Mass Media

But the picture is not altogether black. Here and there spots have been illuminated, islands in the surrounding dark. At present probably the best leads for research come from studies of the influences of the mass media, including some reading of newspapers and mass-circulation magazines.

For example, the volume edited by Schramm (12), plus his article (13) contain studies of the methods and effects of such items as news-

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paper reading and radio programs. DeBoer (5) has reviewed research on the influence of motion pictures, radio, television, and comic books. The most complete review in the new field of research on television seems to be the article by Finn (6). In studies summarized there seems to be little evidence that a single cause produces a single effect, that the effects of one of the mass media, including certain reading, cannot always be isolated in terms of either causes or results. Such books as Wertham's recent *The Seduction of the Innocent* (15) are strong indictments of the effects of the comics (or of crime programs on television), but they are not always objective, scientific documents conversant with theories of multiple causation.

Indeed, a recent report by Bauchard (1), published under the auspices of UNESCO, suggests that denunciations of the press, film, radio, and television as demoralizing for the child remain to be proved. Bauchard points out that in no country have adequate studies been made justifying firm conclusions about the reactions of youth to the different media. He adds, "In fact, where the influences affecting children are concerned, it seems essential to make a clean sweep of all preconceived ideas and prejudices, such as that the cinema encourages juvenile delinquency, pornography is dangerous for the young, accounts of crime incite children to imitate the criminals, etc. In truth, strange as it may appear, we are forced to admit that we know almost nothing about what affects the child." (p. 13). Despite this statement, Bauchard is aware of possible dangers in materials aimed at adults. "Although the press, films and radio for children are, generally speaking, mediocre, those for adults may also, and to an even greater degree, exercise a damaging influence on young people." (p. 14)

Although the studies of the effects of the mass media are limited, then, they are probably more complete than the investigations of the influence of actual reading upon the child. The example cited, and other such studies, point the

way to possible methods of research on the effects of different purposes in reading and of different reading materials.

Related Research in Reading

There is considerable research evidence that one's reading is not a purely intellectual response, but an activity influenced by emotional and attitudinal factors. Attitudes have been shown to influence perception, learning and recall, problem solving, and judgement, all of which may be involved in reading. Is it possible that there is an interaction here? May the child's or adult's reading also influence his perceptions, his concepts, his problem solving and his creative activities? Is reading a small or large influence on a person's thinking?

The effects of attitude on reading comprehension have been adequately summarized by Crossen (4), McKillop (8) and others. For example, Postman, Bruner and McGinnies (9) have demonstrated that personal values affect perception of words. Clark (3) has shown that high school boys and girls recall differently materials they have read which deal with a male-female conflict. Crossen (4) found a significant difference between reading scores of junior high school pupils who expressed unfavorable and relatively indifferent attitudes toward Negroes. McKillop (8) found that adolescents who expressed varying attitudes toward Negroes, Communism, and Israel differed in their interpretation of passages on these topics. Most students answered "correctly" statements on specific details read, but when they were asked to choose a title for the reading passage or make a judgement on the character of the author, the relationships between attitude and reading response were clearly and significantly established.

Such studies indicate that the child's emotions, attitudes, and needs influence what he gets out of his reading. What of interaction here? Can the purpose and material used in reading influence the emotions, attitudes, and personality characteristics?

As suggested above, the research evidence

is slight. In a 1940 report Waples and others (14) believed that they identified five influences of reading:

1. The instrumental effect—gaining greater competence in solving practical problems.
2. The prestige effect—increasing self-esteem by reading socially approved materials.
3. The reinforcement effect—strengthening previously held attitudes.
4. The respite effect—reading for relaxation and escape.
5. The esthetic effect—appreciating well-written passages judged as beautiful.

These hypotheses need to be investigated further with children and adolescents.

In a somewhat different area Russell and Shrodes (11) have summarized available evidence on bibliotherapy or the use of books to influence personal adjustments. Here again, validated results are meager. Russell (10) has also summarized 170 studies on the interrelationships of the language arts and personality, which include a number of reports of interrelationships of reading difficulties and personality disturbances and also a few studies giving positive effects of reading and literature.

Some Suggested Studies

The research review above suggests further investigations such as the following:

1. What are the influences on a child's life of reading as compared to other environmental factors—home, family, peers, and community?
2. What are the influences of reading as compared to films, radio, television, and other media?
3. What are the influences of reading on personality, if any, at different stages of child and adolescent development?
4. What lessons from bibliotherapy with disturbed youth can be applied to the so-called normal child?
5. How can the use of literature be combined with play therapy and other counselling procedures to increase the rate of improving adjustments?

6. What types of story or poetry or drama are most effective in improving self-esteem and social acceptance with individuals or groups?

7. How does the child translate the story of heroism, service, and other desirable ethical standards into behavior?

8. What are the influences of various types of literature often prescribed for children such as religious, didactic, fanciful, and realistic materials?

9. What do children learn at the behavioral level from popular children's stories or widely used reading textbooks?

10. What are the combined effects of material read and the situation in which the child does the reading? How do parental or teacher pressures for achievement, or the school's provision for free-choice reading in a relaxed atmosphere, modify the effects or outcomes of a child's reading?

Here, then, are ten samples of needed research, broadly stated, in an area still largely untouched. In a yearbook on reading instruction Gates (7) said, "In wholehearted reading activity the child does more than understand and contemplate; his emotions are stirred; his attitudes and purposes are modified; indeed, his innermost being is involved." (p. 4) We have reached the stage in reading research where we must concern ourselves with the child's "innermost being," with the deep-laid influences of reading on his thinking and his character.

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An Elementary Book Fair— Fun and Knowledge

MARY E. COBER

Our fifth grade Book Fair was the result of a note from Miss LaSorte, our school librarian, which read, "In observation of Book Week, the Library Club will sponsor a Book Fair. Due to lack of space, the displays will feature junior high books.



Taken during preparations for the Book Fair.

It would be nice if some of the elementary rooms had their own Book Fair."

The room thought it would be nice too and immediately went to work.

With the room president acting as chairman, the children decided on the number of groups or displays they would have. Since there were thirty-two children in the room, they divided into eight groups of four. The children talked about the type of books in which they were interested. After much discussion, each group made its choice. The subjects of the various groups were sports, science and fact stories, animal, cowboy and western stories, mysteries, sports, fairy tales and legends, stories from around the world including favorite

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American stories, and, much to my surprise, poetry.

Things buzzed and hummed in the fifth grade that week. Students visited both the school and the public library and even brought books from home. Each group planned an exhibit around a project or display depicting the type of book they had chosen.

The boys who worked on sports stories turned a card table into a baseball field with the small figure of a pitcher from the Cooperstown Baseball Museum on the mound. Their Little League trophies shared honors with all the sport books that they particularly enjoyed.

A grocery carton was turned into a "theater" by the mystery group. It was painted black and when the white curtains were drawn a ghost popped out. This was the hit of the exhibit.

The poetry group, which included both boys and girls, drew a large castle and mounted it on the blackboard. In a window of a tower was a favorite poem. Books of poems were displayed on a table below the castle.

A model ranch town that one of the children had brought back from a Western trip was the center of interest for the Western group. The table holding the town fitted under the chalk trough in which was a display of cowboy and other western stories.

Many beautiful horse and dog pictures were collected by the animal group. This

group took over a large orange crate bookcase in which they arranged their books with small models of animals.

Science and fact stories featured experiments with a demonstrator ever ready to prove that he was Mr. Wizard.

Around a globe books from around the world were arranged. A collection of foreign and American regional dolls was also part of this exhibit.

Fairy tales shared honors with Pecos Bill, Old Stormalong, and Tony Beaver. Pictures of many of the legendary tall tale heroes and a scene from Sleeping Beauty formed this exhibit.

Book Week was an exciting time in the fifth grade. All the children who came to visit the Book Fair in the library stopped to see our elementary Book Fair too. This gave the room many opportunities to play host and the visitors of the elementary level a chance to find books that they could read.

As a result of the Book Fair, every child used the card catalog and learned to find books on the library shelves of both the school and public library. They wrote invitations and stories about their experiences. The children had a wonderful opportunity to plan and work together and to see their plans completed. They printed signs, learned to display both books and pictures to the best advantage, and interviewed others as to their preferences in books. Best of all, they found that books were fun!

Motivation for Correct Usage

"Why do we wear clothes?" the teacher asked.

For a split second the class of fourth graders sat stunned, looking at her to see if she showed any other outward signs of insanity. Then a tumultuous roar broke the stillness as derisive laughter filled the room. On each face was plainly written a questioning but highly amused expression of unbelief. Just how dumb could a teacher be? Babel, or bedlam, broke out as each child shouted his answer above the clamoring voices of his classmates.

"Well, isn't it against the law *not* to wear 'em?" asked one.

"Why, somebody would see us if we didn't," answered another.

"To cover up, of course," said a third.

"It's too cold to go without," added a superior voice.

"What would people think if we didn't?" piped a prudent one.

"What a crazy question!" came from a disapproving youngster.

When the teacher held up her hand for silence, there was an expectant hush.

"Is it a crazy question?" asked the teacher. "In geography we have studied about people who wear very little or no clothing."

"Yeah, but it's hot where they live and everybody does it, so they think it's all right," argued a sturdy little individualist.

"Oh, no," interrupted another geography-minded youngster. "It's hot in the desert, but people wear lots of clothes there to keep the sun from burning them up."

"Apparently, then, most of you agree

that we wear clothes for two reasons. One to cover us, and the other to protect us. Is that right?" asked the teacher.

"Sure," answered a chorus of superior voices.

"But if those are the *only* reasons, it seems to me that your mothers certainly do trouble themselves unnecessarily to make or to buy such attractive shirts and dresses as you are wearing now. Why don't you make it easy on your mothers and just wrap a sheet around you each morning when you come to school?" queried the teacher indifferently.

Apparently this was the signal for another outburst of glee mingled with derision. It seemed that the teacher was just trying to see how dumb she could be.

"Who wants to wear an old sheet?" shouted several of the boys.

"That's right," answered the teacher. "For you boys your mothers could cut holes in flour sacks or feed sacks for your arms and heads and you would have coverings that would give you more freedom when you run and play."

"Ah, Mrs. Stegall, who'd want to wear that junk anyway?" complained a boy in an attractive and colorful shirt.

"I didn't say anybody would want to, William; I merely asked why you do not wear such things if your only reasons for wearing clothes are to cover up and to keep warm."

"Well, I like pretty clothes," interrupted a little girl whose personal appearance made her utterance an understatement.

Mrs. Stegall is a teacher in Holliday, Texas.

"Me too," chorused both girls and boys.

"How many of you see a shirt here in the room that you would like to have?" continued the teacher. All hands shot up. Then they pointed in various directions indicating the shirts of their choice.

Thereafter followed a discussion of why they liked pretty clothes. Among the most oft-expressed reasons for wanting pretty shirts and dresses was that of wanting to be like some one else. Do the learned call it *social consciousness*? Do the envious call it *keeping up with the Joneses*? Do parents call it the *gang spirit*? Apparently they all come from the same container, but the clever teacher will recognize the trait, regardless of its label, and will capitalize on it for the purpose of insuring the acceptance of standard speech as well as standard behavior.

By skillful manipulation the teacher guided the class into a discussion of other interests. What kind of homes did they want? Why? What kind of cars? Why? How many had ever found it difficult or impossible to express themselves adequately? Why? Where were they when this occurred?

Then without a formal call to order, an English class evolved. Lengthy discussions of correctness and incorrectness in speech and in writing were posed, debated, and pigeon-holed. Just as clothes changed from country to country, from generation to generation, and from home to school, and to Sunday School, the English language changed too. The problems of clothes and speech were harder for some children than for others because some parents simply did not have enough time to keep up with the latest fashions. But it

really was not so hard for children to keep up if they would only look and listen. For any help one might need there were always the pattern books for the clothes, and there were books and actual usage for the speech. Alterations here and there in both would help to keep them up-to-date. There were three areas of social contact in which speech was found to be of paramount importance, and the class as a whole came to understand the reasons for correct usage.

On the playground correct usage was found to be of little importance. To the children it was much like being at home where everybody understood what a fellow meant whether he said it exactly so or not. In this easy camaraderie there seemed to exist a truce in the war for equality, or superiority, in the gang spirit, in social consciousness, or in keeping-up with the Joneses. Their speech was without restraint as shirt-tails flew in the breeze and curls were knocked awry in hop-sotch. The only taboo was that on any word or expression beyond the realm of decency.

In the classroom a bit of the freedom was curbed. The restraint was self-imposed, not teacher-directed. Exchange of ideas, though spontaneous, was more thoughtfully studied. Nobody wanted to hear dumb ideas from someone who spoke just to hear his own voice. If he had a good reason for telling something and stuck reasonably close to the facts in the telling, everybody was eager to listen and equally eager to talk when his turn came. Just as all children returned from the playground adjusting shirt-tails and hair ribbons or straightening unruly hair parts and curls, even so all were readying themselves for class participation. Except just for fun one simply did not say *ain't* in the classroom.

There were other undesirable usages, of course, and since the best pupils and the teacher did not use them, nobody really wanted to, though sometimes poor usage did slip out. Just as the boys practiced football all week in order to beat the other fourth graders whom they played on Friday, all pupils endeavored to speak or write well in class in order to be in good form when they really wanted to make a good impression. This practice paid off, too, when there were thank-you letters to write to companies for lending the class free movies and to speakers who came to tell about foreign countries. It was quite important to know how to write to classes when the fourth graders wanted to congratulate other children on their assembly programs. This practice again came into good use over the weekends, especially at Sunday School and in the children's services where the children were given the opportunity to express themselves. Dressed in their Sunday-best and in the company of people who were above the average in every way, the children were decidedly eager to appear at their best in their speech. Nobody wanted to be too good in his speech; that was worse than not being good enough. People would laugh if anybody "put on airs." Yet nobody wanted to be the worst.

In the foregoing informal discussions are the rudiments of motivation in the learning of good English. Here are no theories. Only a practical approach to a practical subject is possible. And who can deny that language, both oral and written, is practical? Just how practical depends largely upon the individual. Since adults are merely fourth graders grown greater in stature, the same social consciousness be-

sets them at each additional pound though perhaps the language caste system grows more pronounced with the avoirdupois.

Corresponding to the fourth graders' three areas of social contact are found three adult areas of social contact in which speech is of paramount importance. The fourth graders' recess period can be aptly compared with that level of society which is perhaps happily unaware that its speech is considered substandard, vulgar, incorrect, or unacceptable by others. The classroom itself can be compared with the second area of this speech caste system, informal standard English. This level of usage is employed chiefly by the informed for work and leisure hours, and it is also employed by those who use it through influence of early environment without having been formally taught. The third level of language corresponds to the fourth graders' letter-writing and Sunday School experiences in which a formal atmosphere prevails. This is that area which encompasses formality and superior literary endeavor whether spoken or written. Though these three levels of speech, as such, may seem to carry a caste-system connotation, the obvious tragedy of such a situation is not so much that people are placed in these castes by others but that they place themselves there. Unfortunately an almost insurmountable inferiority complex prevails among those people who become conscious of the fact, real or imagined, that they and their speech suffer by comparison with formal standard English and its users. Obviously the teacher's first task is to remove this handicap to learning. Motivation methods similar to the one opening this chapter allay such fears and present a possible avenue of escape to pupils who find

understanding instead of condemnation in their teachers.

With proper motivation children can be taught anything. There is nothing wrong with grammar or usage, and there is nothing wrong with children. Trouble arises only when grammar and children meet as rank strangers with no common ground, not even the weather, on which to make polite conversation. Immediately grammar presents a cold front, and the children declare a cold war. No teacher has moral or professional right to sit indif-

ferently by, doling out packaged or textbook grammar without supplementing it with reason and understanding. Every class from the first grade upward presents a well-equipped laboratory for teaching composition augmented by necessary grammar. All that is absolutely necessary to the effective teaching of grammar in composition is an imaginative and energetic teacher with her mental cupboard well stocked with her wares, grammar, usage, and literature. The children will do the rest.

DWIGHT L. BURTON

Sports—Foot in the Doorway of Literary Appreciation

Archibald (call him Archy but I refuse to resort to the ubiquitous Johnny) who can tear off yardage through left tackle or hit that long ball is not likely to be the shining light in literature. Or Gretchen (I like the name better than Mary) who can swish them through the hoop on the girls' basketball team may not be too sensitive in her reactions to Longfellow or even Eleanor Estes. We may feel, tolerantly or otherwise, that Archy and Gretchen have "different" interests. They are not aesthetic.

But the Archys and the Gretchens have seeds which can sprout important discriminating reactions to literature. The soil in which the seeds can sprout is sports fiction and non-fiction. The all-absorbing interest in sports may furnish a real bridge to discrimination in literature.

Units on sports are inherently appealing to many upper elementary and junior high school pupils. Such units are not merely coddling a preoccupation. Let's say

that the class is engaged in a unit entitled "Sports and Sportsmanship" or "Playing the Game" in which the pupils are reading many different selections of fiction and non-fiction. The teacher conducts a group discussion centered around some of the following questions:

1. What qualities make good athletes? Star athletes?
2. Do the athletes in your books seem real? The coaches? Does their conversation sound natural?
3. How do the sports figures in your books gain success, solve their problems? What sorts of obstacles do they run into?
4. How much actual game action, play-by-play do your books have? Does the author really reproduce the excitement of the game? Can you find any lines in your books where game action is especially well described?
5. Does the author have any "axe to grind" in your books, any moral he is trying to get across?

Dr. Burton is on the faculty of Florida State University.

This discussion of questions like these centers attention on some very basic matters in judging literature which in the context of sports even the "non-literary" pupils can deal with. Who, for example, is in a better position to criticize the characterization of coaches than the boys and girls who are working with them? Stereotyping *versus* real creation of character is the literary matter at issue here. In sports fiction coaches frequently fall into two categories: (1) dark villains who exploit their players or (2) impossible bundles of omniscience who are concerned only with building character rather than winning games.

Dialogue is often badly handled in sports fiction. Scenes are common in which coaches deliver Winston Churchill-like orations in locker rooms between halves and thus send forth rejuvenated teams which sweep all before them. Youngsters quickly catch the falseness of this. And they can spot the ridiculousness in this bit of conversation by the gangling seventeen-year-old southpaw who has just been offered an athletic scholarship: "I appreciate the offer more than I can tell you, sir. But it isn't a real business proposition. I mean you are offering to lend us considerably more money than we can offer security for, are you not?"

And who is better qualified to judge an author's skill in reproducing the thrill of the game action, the authenticity of the play-by-play than Archy and Gretchen who are experiencing that thrill and that play-by-play every day? Despite all the larding in of other elements in sports fiction (and Archy quickly recognizes adult homilies dressed up as football stories), it is still the amount and quality of the game action that

makes or breaks the story. When C. Paul Jackson describes how it feels to be tackled hard and come up spitting sod and limestripe, Archy, who probably has spit a good deal of sod and limestripe himself, is there to rule on the quality of the description. And when another writer insists that "Whiz! Boom! Swish!" represents the pass, the shot, and the resultant basket, Gretchen is there to say it's phony. Archy and Gretchen can become valid literary critics in the sports unit, for this type of reaction to the storyteller's art is basic, too.

Units like "Sports and Sportsmanship" or "Playing the Game" may open new avenues in reading and thought generally. Non-literary Archy may even become a fan of biography as he goes naturally from the sports novel to biographies of Lou Gehrig, Mickey Mantle, or Rocky Marciano. Or Gretchen may be led into other fiction and non-fiction in the whole area of recreation. And within the unit, none of the pupils need remain always on the gridiron or baseball diamond. Starting there, discussions may lead into such matters as group spirit and team play, real sportsmanship, how success is achieved—all matters in which older children and adolescents are interested but about which they may be reluctant to express themselves honestly.

For sensitivity of response to literature goes hand in hand with sensitivity of response to experience. In developing literary appreciation, units on sports are a sound application of "start where they are." Sports literature presents a very real and everyday area of experience.

Pardon my clichés, but if you start where they are, Archy and Gretchen may not be so unaesthetic after all.

Sister, Board that Space Ship!

Ready or not, your school children are coming with their space ships, their rockets, their super-jets, and their trips to the moon. If you were like me, you thought all this was pure fantasy, fit only for the comics, until the *Colliers* articles of March, 1952, came out. Then I sat up and took notice. I even read one of the articles all the way through.

If *Colliers* took its pages and its money to go into this subject, maybe—just maybe—it was something I should know a little about. It really was a fascinating write-up, I had to admit that. And some reputable scientists had their names tied up with it. Hummh, I wondered.

Last May I went to the municipal airport with the fifth grade. There I heard a rehash of aerodynamics which seemed like the last word, but all the while I had a vague feeling that I was slipping back into covered wagon days.

Now don't mistake me. I know that a trip to Mars or to the moon is still a dream. I know that the billions of dollars are not likely to be forthcoming on this old planet which seems to have plenty of troubles of its own and trillions of places for tax money to be spent. But children are dreamers, and, whether we like it or not, this is the new frontier of thought.

The sixth grade had a marionette show, complete with space men, asteroids, and wonderful discoveries. I smiled tolerantly. I commented that marionettes were a natural for space men stories, that the characters gave the illusion of floating and of freedom from gravity. Cute of the

boys to write such a play, I said. Really creative.

But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that they had written of something vital to them. I realized that I could not even talk about their play intelligently. Teachers, on the whole, are not avid readers of science fact or fiction. I had not read or listened as I should. When I woke up it was to wonder if one of these young players might be developing a creative imagination and acquiring a body of knowledge that might help him to open the frontiers of space travel.

Sixth grade boys who would have shied away from a subject called astronomy or a textbook on physics are eating up stuff in their leisure reading that would have made a senior high student of ten years ago sigh and groan. They are mixing fantasy and fact blissfully, as you know if you are a science teacher. They are getting many misconceptions from moving pictures and television shows.

It is our job to help them distinguish space opera from space facts. Science fiction can be entertaining even when based upon the developments which reputable scientists predict. We can supply more good books. We can use this interest instead of pushing it aside.

We who preen ourselves on being able to talk the children's language, we had better get busy. I have just read ten books on *Space Spinners*, *Sky Trails*, *Mysterious*

Miss Dovey is principal of Jackson School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Visitors, and Hot Rod Rockets. I am having the weirdest dreams!

I have read science facts as well as science-fiction. My horizons, I have to admit, are pushed back. I veer from half-

scientific ponderings to super-duper flights of fantasy. But here comes the next wave of television-taught youngsters, my young dreamers, my astronomical addlepaters, bless 'em! And I am going to be ready.

DAYTON BENJAMIN

AND

ALICE BURTON

The Experience Approach to Beginning Reading

The Little Red Car

The little red car can go.
The little red car can go fast.
He can go up.
He can go down.
He can turn left.
He can turn right.
He can stop.
He can not jump.
"Oh dear," said the little red car,
"I can not jump.
I will not quit.
I will go around."
And he did.

What a wonderful feeling of accomplishment to be able to run home and present your parents with a book completely written and illustrated by you and to be able to read every word!

Although they did not actually express it in those terms, we know this was the feeling of our 30 first graders after 50 days of school, when they finally presented their parents with the results of their first cooperative endeavor in the reading program. The writers of this article share the children's enthusiasm; and as a result, should like to offer to other educators the results of our first try at the experience approach to beginning reading.

The point of our article is to indicate that the first steps in learning to read can be tremendously exciting when the program is based on the real life experiences and interests of the learners. We now know that the meaning one grasps *from* the printed page depends upon the amount and quality of experience brought *to* the printed page. For instance, if beginning first graders have had no experience with rubbers, umbrellas, boats, snow, mittens, etc., then the task of reading about these things will have little meaning for them.

It is the job of the teacher to see that this experiential background is provided for her students. The first grade room plus its school and community environment should be the laboratory for building these experiences. Then when the pupils have worked together on some common problems, when they have had some exciting adventures together in their immediate environment, the teacher can show them how to translate these occurrences into printed symbols which are replete with meaning.

Mr. Benjamin is principal, and Miss Burton a teacher, in the Monterey (Cal.) City School District.

The reading program described in this article was designed to accomplish just this. Our 30 first graders were guided through a variety of motor, social, and aesthetic experiences which led directly into a series of experience charts which in turn developed into a book for every child.

Care was taken to avoid the common criticisms of experience charts. First, it was recognized that the chart vocabulary had to be controlled to some degree so that the words learned would lead into some presently existing book. Consequently, an advance word list was carefully prepared from five sets of pre-primers with particular emphasis on the one pre-primer presently in use in our school system. In this way the words learned led directly into actual commercial textbooks.

Second, it has been suggested that an experience chart contains words much too difficult for the majority of the class to handle. But in this case the preparatory experiences created a very definite need for the use of certain words which on the face of it might have appeared too difficult. But the words were so firmly fixed in their minds from recent meaningful use that they had to be learned and recorded in order to provide the high level of sophistication which the children themselves desired. Of course, the experiences were controlled, too, so that a usable and workable vocabulary grew naturally out of these experiences.

Third, care was taken to see that chart words were repeated a sufficient number of times for complete mastery. Some words, of course, had to be repeated more often than others.

We believe that the real purpose of cooperative charts is not to provide easy-to-

remember-or-understand reading material, but to develop a relationship of thinking, recording, and recalling through interpretation of printed symbols. The skills come not as isolated accomplishments, but developed naturally, smoothly, and rapidly through pleasant and unforced practice, in much the same way that one unconsciously learns to walk and to talk.

In order to accomplish our objective a great amount of thinking was required to provide the rich background of experience necessary for the program. Below is a sketchy account of some of the activities which led up to the construction of the charts for the book. Particularly amazing was the fact that not only did we have a reading class, but we had an entire language arts program—reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

On the first day of school the children were presented with a classroom full of exciting centers of interest. Children explored the room and listened to the teacher read aloud the signs over the displays, "We count, we write, we read, we paint, we wash." Signs were so simple and obvious that most children learned to read them within a few days.

Probably the biggest attraction was a pet chipmunk which most children had never seen before.

The following are some of the specific activities for which appropriate cooperative experience charts were made:

1. Measured height of children on paper fastened to closet wall forming permanent chart. Discussed tall, short, big, little, and comparative forms.
2. Children were weighed in room. Each child wrote his own weight on a slip of paper to take home and show his mother.

3. Chose name for chipmunk. Suggested names were written on board (Speedy, Chipper, Lollipop, and Hot-rod). Secret vote (whispered choice to teacher) gave Hot-rod and Lollipop a tie. Children volunteered to come to front of room, tell which name they liked best and WHY they thought it was a good name for the chipmunk. After five speeches for each name (Lollipop and Hot-rod) a second vote was taken and Hot-rod was chosen.
4. Took walk around school grounds to see how many red things we could see. Stressed orderly conduct in group.
5. Learned flag salute. Discussed meaning of flag. Colored paper flags. Learned words: red, white, and blue.
6. Decided to tell parents what we learned our first week in school. It was not to be a newspaper or a letter but something like the notices the secretary sends around to the room to tell us things we need to know. They were called "bulletins." Voted to call our report "First Grade Bulletin." Composed report as a cooperative story. We read completed bulletin in unison before taking it home. This practice was repeated every Friday.
7. Learned safety poem. Practiced safe crossing of imaginary streets with no props. Felt need for toy cars to improve dramatic play.
8. Played traffic game responding to red and green flash card signals. Children walked single file around room pretending to be cars. Learned words "Go" and "Stop" to replace color signals.
9. Made cardboard carton cars. Hole cut in inverted box slips over head and box hangs from straps like suspenders. We had trouble cutting wheels; too stiff for scissors, knives were too dangerous. Gregory suggested trying saw. Found coping saw worked fine. Painted completed cars.
10. Dramatic play: Traffic safety using the cars we made. Decided drivers should have license. Learned meaning of words: Name, Age, Sex, Grade, Go, Stop, Turn left, Turn right. Drilled on

recognizing written words on board. Children wrote correct response to the above words listed on driver's license test. Practiced signaling Stop, Turn left, Turn right, etc.

11. Drivers license test was taken in absolute privacy. They were allowed to have all the oral drill and practice at the board they desired in preparation. If anyone failed the test (perfect score was required) he was permitted to study some more and take the test over again.
12. Excursion was taken to traffic lights around town. Crossed streets carefully where there were no lights, observed signals that existed.
13. Laid out streets on playground with chalk. Used chairs for buildings. Those who did not wish to take driver's test were "pedestrians" and holders of the signal markers. Pedestrians sat in buildings when not crossing streets. Practiced safety with play cars.

After 39 days in the first grade all but ten were able to read any story in the first pre-primer. Many words were learned which were not included in the first pre-primer, so it was only a matter of time before the second pre-primer was read with ease. Generally speaking, we feel that our program has the following advantages:

1. Since the reading program was built around certain activities that were meaningful to them, the children were stimulated to read with a definite purpose in mind, and with infinitely increased enthusiasm.
2. The reading program was considered in its proper relationship with the rest of the activities.
3. The teacher was given an opportunity to capitalize on any particular interests shown by the children.
4. This approach allowed for adaptation to the individual differences of the pupils.
5. It allowed plenty of room for social development through the use of language in areas other than reading from books.

6. The transition from the reading readiness program to the pre-primers was gradual and continuous.
7. It encouraged group cooperation and thus allowed for rich personality development.
8. It showed the children all the various

reasons for reading—for fun, for information, for details and for general outlines.

The experience approach to beginning reading is past the experimental stage; it's a sure thing!

PAUL WITTY*

Children and TV—A Fifth Report

The expansion of interest in TV in America is one of the most phenomenal developments of modern times. A number of surveys have revealed the growing popularity of TV. For example, Thomas E. Coffin reported in 1949 that the average amount of time devoted each week to TV was more than 24 hours.¹ Another survey conducted about the same time in Milwaukee revealed that an average audience of four persons per set spent 5.3 hours daily in televiewing. Young children and teen-agers were found to be consistent viewers.² In several other surveys five- and six-year old children were reported to be giving the largest amount of time to TV. Of course, children and youth of all ages were strongly attracted to this new medium. Among older children of the elementary school, interest in TV was very strong. Several studies disclosed data similar to those included in a report by W. G. McGinnis, superintendent of schools in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, who found that the average amount of time spent televiewing by pupils in the upper elementary grades was between 15 and 25 hours a week.³

Among junior and senior high school pupils,

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¹Thomas E. Coffin. "Television's Effects on Leisure-Time Activities," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 32 (1949), pp. 550-558.

²"Milwaukee's Likes Surveyed." *Broadcasting*, Vol. 27, No. 14 (October 3, 1949).

³W. G. McGinnis. "Now It's Television," *The Journal of Education*, Vol. 133, (May, 1950), p. 152.

surveys disclosed large amounts of televiewing, too. In 1950, Gertrude Young reported a range of 1½ hours to 5½ hours daily at the junior high school level.⁴ In the Burdick Junior High School in Stamford, Connecticut, it was found in 1950 that only 50 per cent of the students had TV sets at home; yet 79 per cent of the entire student body followed TV programs regularly. Pupils in homes having sets averaged 3.86 hours a day televiewing; in homes of non-owners, 2.64 hours. In the homes that had TV sets, televiewing was heavier on Saturday (4.2 hours) and Sunday (4.3 hours). It is of interest to compare the time spent televiewing with that required by the entire school curriculum. The school schedule in Stamford occupied 27 hours and 55 minutes of time each week; the average time spent weekly in televiewing by pupils in homes having TV sets was 27 hours!¹

Reaction of Parents and Teachers to TV

Parents and teachers were quick to react to TV. To some TV seemed to be a great menace. "TV is converting our children into a race of spectators," said one parent. "Life should be lived not watched," said another. "Competing with TV for the attention of children is impossible," wrote a discouraged teacher. However,

⁴Gertrude Young. "Operation Video," *Clearing House*. Vol. 24, (May, 1950), pp. 156-157.

¹Jack Gould. "Pupils' Time Spent at TV Rivals Hours in Classes," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1950.

some parents and teachers cited the desirable effects of televiewing stressing the value of TV in extending experience and cultivating interests. However, the adverse effects of excessive televiewing were repeatedly set forth in magazines and newspapers. And surveys were interpreted in various ways. One of the most widely quoted surveys utilized a team of research workers who "monitored" all the TV programs presented by New York City's seven stations during one week in January 1951.

What did they find? Of the 564 hours the TV stations were on the air, 277 hours, or about one-half of the time, was spent on drama (crime, westerns, romance, and comedy), sports, variety, and vaudeville shows. Not counting news and home-making programs, only 3 per cent of the time was used for informational programs, and 3 per cent for discussions and religious programs. Commercial advertising took up 10 per cent of the entire time.

Children's programs filled 70 hours (about 12 per cent of the 564).

Almost half of the time set aside for children was given over to westerns, thrillers, and animated cartoon films. During the entire week, only 3 hours could be labeled "for information and instruction." Only one station had entertainment for pre-school children—one-half hour a day.¹

The above survey is quoted again as an overall indictment of TV, insofar as children are concerned. In interpreting such a study, it should be pointed out that the data apply to the situation only at the time the study was made. Moreover, such a study does not reveal children's choices of programs or reactions to TV. Nor does it disclose any of the effects of TV upon children.

Five studies of TV

The writer of this article believes that a desirable source for the formation of conclusions

¹Discussed by Paul Witty and Harry Bricker. *Your Child and Radio, TV, Comics and Movies*. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1952. p. 14.

concerning TV will be found in studies of the reactions of children, parents, and teachers.

This paper presents the fifth yearly study of the amount of time devoted to TV, and programs preferred by elementary and secondary school pupils, their parents, and their teachers. Included also are reports on "disliked" programs as well as types of offerings that the three groups would like to have presented on TV. The first and second studies were made during 1950 and 1951, and were summarized in *Elementary English*, May, 1952. The third study was made during April and May 1952 and was reported in *Elementary English*, December, 1952. The fourth study was made in the spring of 1953, and appeared in *Elementary English*, November, 1953.

The first survey, made in 1950, included Evanston children, their parents and teachers. The second study, in 1951, was a follow-up of Evanston children, but included also pupils from Oak Park-River Forest High School. In 1952, pupils from Calumet City, Skokie, Barrington, and Evanston were used in the study. The 1953 study included 1000 pupils from two Chicago elementary schools, 700 pupils from two elementary schools in Evanston, 400 students from the Evanston Township High School, and 900 elementary and junior high school pupils from the Winnetka schools. In 1954 (April and May) 1500 elementary school pupils and 400 secondary school pupils from Chicago and Evanston schools were used as subjects. The following section of this paper includes some of the results of the fifth study and presents a comparison of the 1954 study with earlier investigations.

Ownership of TV sets

The amount of ownership of TV sets has a shown a steady increase. In 1950, 43 per cent of the pupils had TV sets at home; in 1951, the per cent was 68; in 1952, it was 88; in 1953, it was 92, and in 1954, 96. In many classes every child in the room had access in 1954 to a TV set

at home; and in some cases, there were two or even more sets in the home. In this area, the saturation point appears to have been reached in TV ownership generally. However, the teachers continued to report fewer sets than did the other

groups. At the time of the 1951 study only 25 per cent watched TV; this per cent rose to 48 in 1952; and in 1953, to 62. In 1954, 83 per cent of the teachers had sets. Table I presents these data.

TABLE I
Ownership of TV Sets

<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
1950	43	1950-51	25
1951	68	1952	48
1952	88	1953	62
1953	92	1954	83
1954	96		

Time spent televiewing

The time spent with TV has decreased somewhat during the past year. In 1950, the elementary pupils spent 21 hours each week with TV; in 1951, the average was slightly lower—19 hours. There was a slight increase during the next two years—to 23 hours of televiewing each week by the elementary school pupils in 1953. In 1954, the average was 21.5 hours per week. In 1953, the average for high school pupils was 17 hours per week as compared with about fourteen hours for the present year. In the Evanston Township High School the average was 13, while certain Chicago school teachers

reported an average of 15 hours.

In 1950, the parents spent 24 hours on the average each week in televiewing; this figure dropped to about 20 hours in 1951; in 1953 it was about 19 hours per week. In 1954, the average was about 16½ hours.

Teachers continue to spend less time with TV than do the children or the parents. In 1951, the teachers averaged about nine hours per week in televiewing; in 1953, the average number of hours devoted to TV by teachers was 12. And in 1954, the average was 11.5 hours. Data concerning amount of televiewing are given in Table II.

TABLE II
Average Hours Spent Weekly with Television

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
Elementary school pupils	21	19	22.5	23	21.5
High school pupils		14	14	17	14.0
Parents	24	20	21	19	16.3
Teachers		9	11	12	11.5

This study shows clearly that the prediction holding that the amount of televiewing would drop sharply after the novelty of sets had worn off has not been fulfilled. Yet there has been a slight decline in televiewing during the past year. However, it will be noted that the average for the elementary school pupils has decreased little during the past year—from 23 to 21½ hours per week. There can be little doubt

that televiewing is the favorite leisure activity of elementary school pupils who persist in spending upwards of 20 hours per week in this activity. High school pupils give much less time to TV and seem to be taking this activity in stride.

Adults as represented by these parents seem to have settled down to a consistent though somewhat smaller amount of viewing since a

saturation point in the sale of sets has been reached. However, the average amount of time given daily to TV is more than two hours.

Ranks of favorite programs

Changes have taken place in the ranks of favorite programs and many new programs have become popular. In 1950, the favorite programs of the children included *Hopalong Cassidy*, *Howdy Doody*, *Lone Ranger*, *Milton Berle*, *Arthur Godfrey*, and *Small Fry*. Changes occurred rapidly and new favorites appeared. In 1952, *I Love Lucy* was the best liked program of boys and girls. *My Friend Irma* and *Roy Rogers* were also highly endorsed. New favorites, such as *Superman*, *Red Buttons*, and *Dragnet* found their way toward the top of the list in 1953. In 1954, the elementary school pupils liked these programs best: *I Love Lucy*, *Dragnet*, *My Little Margie*, *Roy Rogers*, *Topper*, and *Superman*.

The preferences of high school students also changed. Only *Arthur Godfrey*, an early favorite, remained among the top five programs preferred by high school students in 1953. *I Love Lucy* retained first place. And *Dragnet*, *Colgate Comedy Hour*, and *Red Buttons* were also included among the most popular programs. The high school students in Chicago and Evanston preferred in 1954 the following: *I Love*

Lucy, *Dragnet*, *I Led Three Lives*, *This Is Your Life*, *Colgate Comedy Hour*, *Jackie Gleason*, and *Liberace*. *Arthur Godfrey* did not appear in the ten favorites for 1954.

In 1950, *Arthur Godfrey* and *Milton Berle* were extremely well-liked by the parents. Sports programs, including the ubiquitous wrestling exhibitions, were very popular. Choices were altered during the period 1950 to 1954. In 1953, *I Love Lucy* held first rank, followed by *What's My Line?* and *Omnibus*. *Arthur Godfrey* remained in the list with fourth rank. The 1954 favorites were: *I Love Lucy*, *This Is Your Life*, *See It Now*, *What's My Line?*, *Kraft TV Theater*, and *Arthur Godfrey*.

Only 25 per cent of the teachers had TV sets in 1950. An increase in TV ownership gradually raised the per cent to 83 in 1954. *What's My Line?* appeared as the first choice in 1951 and continued as a favorite in 1952, 1953, and 1954. The teachers showed less enthusiasm for *I Love Lucy* than did their pupils and the parents. However, some were attracted to this program. In 1953, popular programs of the teachers included: *Meet the Press*, *Omnibus*, *News*, *What's My Line?*, and *Mr. Peepers*. The teachers' preferences in 1954 were: *What's My Line?*, *Kraft TV Theater*, *Fred Waring Show*, *Person to Person*, and *Omnibus*. A summary of preferences is found in Table III.

TABLE III
Favorite Television Programs of Elementary and High School Pupils
1950

Elementary School Pupils	
1. Hopalong Cassidy	
2. Howdy Doody	
3. Lone Ranger	
4. Milton Berle	
5. Arthur Godfrey	
6. Small Fry	
Elementary School Pupils	
	1951
1. Crusader Rabbit	
2. Hopalong Cassidy and Adventures of Wild Bill Hickok	
3. Howdy Doody	
4. Uncle Mistletoe	
5. Lone Ranger	
High School Pupils	
1. Sports	
2. Milton Berle	
3. Toast of the Town	
4. Arthur Godfrey	
5. Fred Waring Show	

1952

1. I Love Lucy
2. My Friend Irma
3. Roy Rogers Show
4. Red Skelton
5. Tom Corbett

1. I Love Lucy
2. Red Skelton
3. Sports
4. Colgate Comedy Hour
5. What's My Line?

1953

1. I Love Lucy
2. Superman
3. Red Buttons
4. Dragnet
5. Roy Rogers Show

1. I Love Lucy
2. Dragnet
3. Colgate Comedy Hour
4. Arthur Godfrey
5. Red Buttons

1954

1. I Love Lucy
2. Dragnet
3. My Little Margie
4. Roy Rogers Show
5. Topper and Superman

1. I Love Lucy
2. Dragnet
3. I Led Three Lives
4. This Is Your Life,
Colgate Comedy Hour and
Jackie Gleason
5. Liberace

TABLE IV

Favorite Television Programs of Parents and Teachers

1950

Parents

1. Arthur Godfrey
2. Milton Berle
3. Sports
4. Fred Waring Show
5. Kukla, Fran and Ollie

1951

Parents

1. Arthur Godfrey
2. Fred Waring Show
3. Milton Berle
4. Sports
5. Mama and What's My Line?

Teachers

1. What's My Line?
2. Current Events and News
3. Fred Waring Show
4. Your Show of Shows
5. Toast of the Town

1952

1. I Love Lucy
2. Arthur Godfrey
3. What's My Line?
4. Mama
5. Plays, Theater, Drama

1. News
2. Meet the Press
3. What's My Line?
4. Clifton Utley
5. I Love Lucy

1953

1. I Love Lucy
2. What's My Line?
3. Omnibus
4. Arthur Godfrey
5. Mr. Peepers

1. Meet the Press
2. Omnibus
3. News
4. What's My Line?
5. Mr. Peepers

1954

1. I Love Lucy
2. This Is Your Life
3. See It Now
4. What's My Line?
5. Kraft TV Theater

1. What's My Line?
2. Kraft TV Theater
3. Fred Waring Show
4. Person to Person
5. Omnibus

Disliked and desired programs

The children placed *Howdy Doody* and *Milton Berle* at the top of the list of disliked programs in 1952. *Westerns*, *Murder Mysteries*, and *Milton Berle* were in disfavor with parents and teachers. In 1953, the children cited *Howdy Doody*, *Westerns*, *Milton Berle*, and *Captain Video* as unpopular programs. Parents indicated that *Murder Mysteries* and *Crime Programs* were in greatest disfavor. *Westerns*, *Milton Berle*, and *Old Movies* followed. The teachers expressed a dislike for *Murder Mysteries* and *Crime Programs*, *Wrestling*, *Westerns*, and *Old Movies*. In 1954, similar programs were disliked by the children—among them *Howdy Doody*, *News*, and *Captain Video*. The parents and teachers in 1954 expressed a common dislike for *Westerns*, *Wrestling*, and *Milton Berle*.

The pupils said they would like to see the following types added: *Comedy*, *Mysteries*, *sports*, *space programs*, and *scientific presentations*. Both parents and teachers suggested that more programs be devoted to *education*, *drama*, *history*, *travel*, *music*, and *current events*.

Relationship of amount of televiewing to intelligence and to educational attainment

In several studies, it became clear that amount of televiewing is not related closely to intelligence or to scholarship. For example, in one study the relationship between intelligence and amount of televiewing was ascertained. The IQ's of pupils in grades III to VI were correlated with the hours devoted to TV. The size of the coefficients was insignificant in every grade. There was also very little correlation between educational test results and amount of televiewing. Excessive viewing of TV, however, seemed to be associated with somewhat lower academic

attainment. For example, the amount of time devoted to TV by pupils in the upper fourth of the group in educational attainment as measured by standard tests, was compared with the time spent in televiewing by pupils in the lower fourth. The average time devoted to TV by pupils in the lower fourth was 26 hours, while that of the upper fourth was 20 hours per week.

Although TV does not on the whole seem to influence educational attainment adversely, there are individual cases in which its effects are undesirable as reported by teachers and parents. On the other hand, there are children who have been stimulated to do better work in school because of interests engendered by TV.

Problems associated with TV

Both teachers and parents continue to report behavior and adjustment problems associated with TV. About half of the teachers and one third of the parents indicated the presence of such problems in 1950. In 1953, the per cent was 28 reported by the teachers, and 30 by the parents. Similar percentages were reported in 1954, 39 per cent by parents and 30 by teachers. The problems centered around such items as increased nervousness, fatigue, impoverishment of play, disinterest in school, and eye strain.

In 1954, a group of teachers made investigations of the children in their classes who spent extremely large amounts of time televiewing. Some of the children were problem cases, but others were well-adjusted, successful students. In every case of maladjustment, factors such as poor home conditions, lack of interest, unfortunate experience, and other factors seemed to contribute to the child's difficulties. TV alone could not be held responsible for undesirable behavior. The teachers concluded that an appraisal of the desirability or undesirability of

televiewing could be ascertained only by a complete case study of each child.

Reading and televiewing

Parents, like the teachers, indicated that many children read less than they did before TV. Decrease in amount of reading, however, was not always regarded as a problem by them. In 1953, 38 per cent of the parents and 34 per cent of the teachers said that children in the elementary school read less than before TV. A similar percentage (39) of the pupils indicated they, too, felt that the amount of their reading in 1953 was smaller. Forty-six per cent indicated that they read about the same amount, and 15 per cent stated that they read more. In 1954, 38 per cent of the pupils said that they read less; 40, about the same amount and 22 per cent indicated that they read more. And in 1954, 39 per cent of the parents and 29 per cent of the teachers stated that pupils read less.

It became clear from several analyses that more than one-third of these pupils read less than they did before TV, although the average amount of reading has not been altered greatly and although some children actually read more now. The third that read less are considered a serious problem by some parents and teachers.

In 1953 and again in 1954 teachers and parents reported that they would like to see the addition of educational programs that would stimulate children to read, and that it would be desirable to arrange schedules so that more superior programs for children could be offered during the early evening hours. Better planning of such presentations was also suggested. The teachers and parents stressed, too, the necessity for discrimination in the choices among current offerings. Some parents reported that family councils have been most effective in improving habits of televiewing. The teachers cited a number of examples of the successful use of TV in fostering interest and engendering success in school. Moreover, both parents and teachers stressed the value of certain programs such as *Zoo Parade* and *Ding Dong School*.

The effects of TV will depend upon the nature of the child. For some children, the large amount of time spent televiewing is obtained at the expense of other activities. It has been shown that a large number of children actually read less now, although the average amount of reading has not changed greatly. It is worth noting too that one type of reading has certainly not decreased—the reading of comic magazines.

These facts suggest the need for attempting to guide each child so that his reading and his recreation are balanced and individually suitable. Parents and teachers should work together to attain this goal.

Educational uses of TV

Perhaps the greatest value of TV resides in its potentiality for motivating and improving education. Several very interesting accounts of attempts to use TV to foster desirable school work have appeared in periodicals recently. In one of these accounts, the endeavor of a planning council in an elementary school of Brooklyn is described. A guide was prepared to help pupils throughout the school develop discrimination in the use of TV and to aid them in assimilating TV desirably in their total patterns of recreation. The writers hoped also to make TV a two-way experience in which children would not only view programs, but would also be led to communicate their own reactions to the products of programs.

The guide was introduced in October 1951 and teachers' reactions were obtained in June 1952. The amount of time spent televiewing was reported to be three to four hours daily during the winter as compared with about two hours during the summer.

As a result of the introduction of discussions and activities related to TV, taste and discrimination were developed. Moreover, less time was spent televiewing as children came to devote more time to reading, to club activities, and to artistic pursuits. As a result of preparing letters to be sent to producers, the children became

aware of the part the consumer may play in affecting the kinds of programs offered.

In addition, the children applied techniques observed on TV to improve their own performance in activities such as baseball and basketball. Finally, they discovered that schedules can be planned so that all members of a family may have opportunities to view favorite programs.

In making TV an ally in instruction, the teachers developed a variety of useful techniques including: making a census of programs watched, discussion and criticism of selected programs, the use of and the planning of assembly programs.

In conclusion:

Even though the television program guide was introduced in the school on an experimental basis, both teachers and pupils feel that it is doing an important job of guidance in the field. The teachers believe that it has achieved the desirable objectives sought. Because of this, the introduction of television education in the elementary schools can be recommended as productive of good in the field of leisure-time activities.¹

A number of very promising educational programs have been launched on TV. For example, the art department of the Oklahoma City public schools has started a series of thirty-six Saturday morning programs presenting the basic processes and technics of the various creative crafts. The program has proved effective in stimulating children to employ their own creative ideas in making beautiful and useful objects from waste or inexpensive materials.²

An emergency educational program was presented via radio and television to Baltimore pupils during the week of January 6, 1953, when a strike of city workers involved school firemen and engineers. The following comments

¹Sigmund Fogler. "Progress Reports on TV," *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. LIII (May 1953).

²Melvin W. Barnes. "Thousands Study Creative Crafts Through Television," *The Nation's Schools*, Vol. LII (July, 1953), pp. 86-88.

were made by Arnold Wilkes, Director of Public Affairs and Education, WBAL.

The programs ranking highest in the opinion of over 46,000 boys and girls were television lessons in science and the language arts. Each of these programs strongly emphasized "demonstration."

All programs were well covered by the television audience which is almost six times the size of the radio audience. Sixty-four per cent of the students felt that they actually learned something. We believe that this figure would have been greatly increased had the programs not been of so general a nature and if the children had been permitted our usual habit of supply them with previous information.

Although TV education is not a supplement to normal classroom procedure, a corollary is that where the individual pupil is for any reason unable to participate in normal schooling, he need not now be cut off from any educational procedures, provided he has access to TV.³

One important outcome of the experiment was the better understanding of education which many parents obtained. In general, the responses of pupils, teachers and parents were favorable, and many found significant implications for the use of TV in school.

Several writers have pointed to the potential values of the new educational channel. One writer points out that TV is an audio-visual aid and that special techniques are necessary to employ it successfully.⁴ Practical suggestions are made in another article.⁵

In May, 1953, Belmont Farley stated that

³Almost the entire issue of the *Baltimore Bulletin of Education* is devoted to descriptions and results of the Emergency Program. "School Via TV." *Baltimore Bulletin of Education*, Vol. XXX (May, 1953).

⁴William J. Temple. "TV Is AV," *Scholastic Teacher*, Vol. LVII (March 4, 1953), p. 14.

⁵William J. Temple. "Classroom Television," *Scholastic Teacher*, (May 6, 1953), p. 14.

⁶Belmont Farley. "Let's Look at Educational Television," *N.E.A. Journal*, Vol. XLIII (May, 1953). pp. 278-279.

which led one to recall the ingenious pioneer endeavor of Phillip Lewis and Margaret Kincheloe.⁷

Criticisms of TV continue to be similar to strictures directed in former years against the comics, the radio, and the movies. The complaints reflect a feeling that the growing interest in TV will influence study habits adversely and will cause children and young people to read less and to choose materials of inferior quality and doubtful value. Moreover, some parents and teachers believe that excessive interest in TV may divert the child from participation in wholesome recreation and in desirable physical activities. The threat of TV to interest in reading is often stressed by parents and teachers. To offset this threat both parents and teachers can make positive contributions. Parents can help greatly by setting a good model for children to emulate in their own behavior. If they turn frequently to books for information and pleasure, their children will probably conclude that reading is worthwhile and will themselves be more inclined to read. If parents plan a family schedule of recreation that includes reading and other activities, as well as television, many children will be led to assimilate TV in well-balanced individually suitable programs of leisure activity. If some TV programs are discussed by parents and children as a basis for the selection of books, children undoubtedly will turn to reading more frequently. In such cases parents and children together will build home libraries and make greater use of the public library.

Another criticism of TV was repeatedly set forth by the parents and teachers—namely, they cited the inferior quality of many TV programs for children. One parent inquired: "Can't we have better children's programs? Must we have comic-book presentations so often?" There is good reason for this concern of parents and teachers. According to *Newsweek* (July 26,

⁷Discussed by Paul Witty and Harry Bricker, *op. Cit.*

23 applications for educational television channels have been made. Fourteen of the applicants had been granted permission to build stations. Two stations, Iowa State College and Michigan State College, established as commercial stations but devoted wholly or largely to education were in operation.⁸ And a number of other writers describe experiments in classrooms (1954). "The National Association for Better Radio and Television announced that crime and violence on kids' programs have increased by 400 percent in the last three years. In a 60-hour study, association samplers found 26 hours of the programming to be 'objectionable.' Five shows—*Captain Midnight*, *Captain Video*, *Dick Tracy*, *Eastside Kids*, and *Ramar of the Jungle*—were judged 'most objectionable.'" There is a great need for parents and teachers to take active steps in the development and encouragement of better programs for children. They can plan an important role.

These steps will help. But there is another important item. Many children may read the comics exclusively and spend much time with TV because they read other materials so poorly or so slowly that they find little satisfaction in reading. The reading of comics and tele-viewing do not usually penalize the pupils for their lack of skill in reading. Such children should be helped to develop more efficient habits in silent and oral reading. Parents, too, who read poorly should attempt to improve their reading rates and comprehension. Studies show that great gains can be made by both groups.

In conclusion: Our studies suggest that children's strong interest in TV may prove a liability or an asset. Teachers and parents should work together to assure the provision of guidance and stimulation so that boys and girls will make the most of this new, appealing medium. Already the results of some educational programs are reassuring and the future holds promise of far-reaching and generally rewarding developments.

Councilletter

Dear Council Members,

Plans are well along for the Thanksgiving meeting in Detroit's Hotel Statler on November 25, 26, 27. This issue of *Elementary English* carries the program, evidence of hard work on the part of the responsible committee.

Local arrangements are being worked out under the direction of Helen Hanlon of the Detroit Public Schools, and Peter Donchian of Wayne University. Among the planned events will be a trip to the elementary book collection at Wayne, perhaps the best of its kind in the country. The three divisional chairmen have this year worked out some new features for Saturday morning. Examine the program carefully, if you will.

Several innovations mark the three-day schedule. These have come about as a result of your suggestions to the Executive Committee, and we hope that you will report your experience with these changes.

A first change concerns committee sessions on Thursday. Distance makes committee work difficult. Gains have been made recently through appointing some committees on a local basis, so that members may meet frequently; but not all committees may be so arranged. This year we are asking each chairman whose committee needs to meet, to call that meeting for lunch on Thursday noon. Following the lunch, committees will meet until three o'clock for work, after which they will adjourn to the business meeting of the Council. This means that the sessions of the Directors will have to be somewhat abbreviated; but the Executive Committee has been working on this problem and believes that such a shortening can be made without serious loss.

At our opening session, Thursday night, fifteen past presidents have indicated that they will attend and appear on the platform. Our main speaker is to be Doctor Harlan Hatcher,

President of the University of Michigan. Dr. Hatcher is the author of a number of novels and of books on regional history. He was formerly head of the Department of English at Ohio State University.

Many members will want to know our new Executive Secretary, Professor J. N. Hook. This year we are substituting for the usual president's address, a talk by Dr. Hook, "The National Council Looks Ahead." His ideas will, we hope, form the basis for effort and discussion by members, both at the conference and through subsequent correspondence.

As our conventions have grown larger, there has been a problem in arranging for adequate discussion of papers. An attempt is being made to meet this difficulty. The number of sessions on Friday morning is being increased, but procedures are changed. During the first part of each session, the round table group will listen to a substantial paper setting forth questions or proposals in a given area. After a short breathing time, the audience will reconvene for an hour and a half of discussion under a competent leader. Resource persons in the audience will guarantee rich contributions, and the chairmen will be under oath not to let the discussion get out of hand. It is suggested that each one planning to attend look over the program carefully, choose a session, and come prepared to take part; thus every member of the audience will share in the program.

On Friday afternoon there will be an additional set of meetings in such specialized areas as educational television, unit teaching, evaluating the core program, new views of grammar, and the bilingual problem.

At the Friday evening banquet, our toastmaster is another former English chairman, President Hilberry of Wayne. Our speaker of the evening is the famous Professor F. S. C. Northrup of the Department of Philosophy and

Law at Yale University, author of *The Meeting of East and West*. His discussion of "Sources of Strength in American Culture" should set us to thinking.

For the closing luncheon we are fortunate in having as speaker Miss Virgilia Peterson. She will be familiar to Council members through her work as moderator of *Author Meets the Critics*, and for her contributions on *Invitation to Learning*. Miss Peterson speaks on "Books in Profile," emphasizing the current literary scene. Expect to learn from her, and to find this woman, who knows life on two continents, sparkling and stimulating.

Obviously this is a conference designed to combine social and informal exchange with work. In committees or in discussion groups, each will have a contribution to make. Among the too-numerous-to-mention-more-than-briefly items are the Commission's second volume, *Language Arts for Today's Children* and galleys for Volume Three dealing with the secondary school.

The program is both rich and tempting, but to prevent a feeling of haste and pressure, the committee has attempted to keep individual programs uncrowded. There is room for some contribution, either in committee sessions or from the floor, by each member who attends.

Lou LaBrant, President
Joseph Mersand,
Second Vice-president



In accordance with Article XI of the Council constitution, the Executive Committee has authorized the submission of the following proposed amendments, to be voted upon at the Annual Business Meeting on Thanksgiving afternoon in Detroit:

1. To amend Article VI, Section A, paragraph 2d, by adding the italicized words: "Council officers, chairmen of the three sections, *three members to be elected by the Conference on College Composition and Communi-*

cation, all chairmen and associate chairmen of Council committees, and one person designated by each affiliated association as its liaison officer to the Council shall be members ex officio of the board of directors of the Council.

Reasons: 1. The amendment will give greater recognition and authority to the strong young Council group, the CCCC. 2. To increase the efficiency of committees the Executive Committee is instituting the practice of naming an associate chairman for each committee. Because of the importance of this position, it seems desirable to make each associate chairman a director. 3. If this amendment passes, the Council will ask each affiliate to choose one person, in addition to the director or directors, who will serve as a liaison representative between the Council and the affiliate. The proposed amendment will give this person status in the Council as well as in his affiliate.

2. To amend Article VII, Section B, paragraph 1, to read: "Each section shall have a steering committee known as the section committee, consisting of seven members each serving for three years, three to be elected in 1946 and in each third year thereafter, and two elected in each other year, *except that, beginning in 1955, the college section shall elect only two members each year, the seventh member to be elected by the Conference on College Composition and Communication in 1955 and each third year thereafter.*

Reason: Same as the first one above.

3. To amend Article VII, Section B, paragraph 4, by deleting "and Council directors elected by the sections."

Reason: The context is: "Section committee members and Council directors elected by the sections shall take office at the close of the November meeting." This statement is correct for section committee members, but contradicts Article VI, Section A, paragraph 2c, which states that the directors "take office in November at the beginning of the annual meeting."

4. To amend the first part of No. 1 of the

By-laws to read: "The annual voting dues for voting members of the Council, including subscription to *Elementary English*, *The English Journal*, or *College English*, shall be \$4.00." (The effect of this amendment would be to make dues uniform, instead of \$3.50 for the elementary section and \$4.00 for each of the other sections, as at present.)

Reason: The different rate for elementary section membership dates back to a time when the Council's services to elementary teachers were less than at present and *Elementary English* was a smaller publication than the other Council magazines. Now that the elementary section has reached the stature of the others, it seems just to equalize the dues.



NCTE Election Notice

In accordance with the Constitution of the National Council of Teachers of English, the Board of Directors at its meeting last Thanksgiving Day chose Paul Farmer, Harlen M. Adams, Helen F. Olson, Robert C. Pooley, and Blanche Trezevant as a Nominating Committee to propose officers for 1955. Through Paul

Farmer, the chairman, the committee offers these nominations:

For President: JOHN C. GERBER, State University of Iowa

For First Vice-President: LUELLA B. COOK, Minneapolis Public Schools

For Second Vice-President: DAVID H. RUSSELL, University of California, Berkeley

For Directors-at-Large: JEROME W. ARCHER, Marquette University; WILLIAM D. BOUTWELL, Scholastic publications and Teachers College, Columbia University; BERNICE FREEMAN, Troup County, Georgia, Public Schools; HORTENSE L. HARRIS, Gloucester, Massachusetts, High School; HAROLD HUSEBY, Lincoln High School, Seattle; FANNIE J. RAGLAND, Cincinnati Public Schools.

This slate will be presented for action at the meeting of the Board next November. No additional nominations have been received. When the election of the committee's nominees is moved, other nominations may be made by members of the Board.

FORTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Hotel Statler, Detroit, Michigan

November 23-27, 1954

I taught them the grouping of letters, to be a memorial and record of the past, the mistress of the arts and mother of the Muses.

—*Prometheus Unbound*, Euripides

Partial, Preliminary Program

Tuesday, November 23

Meeting of the Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m.—10:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 24

Meeting of the Commission on the English Curriculum, 9:30 a.m.—10:00 p.m.

Meeting of the Executive Committee, 1:30—4:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 25

All day exhibit of materials and aids for teaching

Registration, 8:00 a.m.—10:00 p.m.

Meeting of the Board of Directors, 9:00 a.m.—12:00 noon
(All members of the Council are invited to attend as auditors)

Luncheon meetings of Council Committees called by chairmen,

12:00 noon—1:00 p.m.

Working sessions of Council committees, 1:00—3:00 p.m.

Annual Business Meeting, 3:15—4:30 p.m.

* * * * *

General Session, 8:00 p.m.

Session honors all past presidents, seated on platform

Presiding, Lou LaBrant, Atlanta University, President of the Council

Invocation

Welcome, Arthur Dondineau, Superintendent of Detroit Public Schools

Program announcements, Joseph Mersand, New York City Schools,
Second Vice-president

Introduction of Past Presidents

Address: *The National Council Looks Ahead*, J. N. Hook
Executive Secretary of the Council

Address: *Between Two Worlds*, Harlan Hatcher, President,
University of Michigan

Reception by Executive Committee, Local Committee,
and former presidents, 10:30 p.m.

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Friday, November 26

Group Conferences, 9:15—10:25 a.m.

Theme: How Rich Is Our Bounty!

Utilizing Our Wealth of Research, Experience, and Creative
Imagination in Teaching the Language Arts

I. Creative Activities in Language Arts in Elementary School

Presiding, Blanche Trezevant, Florida State University

Speakers: Alvina Treut Burrows, New York University

Ruth G. Strickland, Indiana University

(Topic pursued in Discussion Group A)

II. How Can We Create an Effective Course of Study in the Language Arts?

Presiding, Dora V. Smith, University of Minnesota, Director, Commission on the English Curriculum

Speakers:

For an Entire City—Paul Farmer, Language Arts Coordinator, Atlanta

For a High School English Department—Hortense L. Harris, Gloucester, Massachusetts, High School

For an Elementary School—Grace Rawlings, Principal of P.S. 64, Baltimore
(Topic Pursued in Discussion Group B)

IV. *What Does Recent Research Say about the Teaching of Language and Literature?*

Presiding, Robert C. Pooley, University of Wisconsin.

Speakers:

Reading—Paul A. Witty, Northwestern University

Writing—Isabel Kincheloe, Chicago Teachers College

Speaking—Rupert L. Cortright, Wayne University

Listening—Althea Beery, Supervisor of Elementary Education, Cincinnati

VIII. *What's Happening to the Three R's?*

Presiding, M. Agnella Gunn, Boston University

Speakers: Virginia Belle Lowers, Los Angeles Public Schools

David H. Russell, University of California

John J. DeBoer, University of Illinois

(Topic pursued in Discussion Group H)

XII. *Vitalizing the Teaching of Literature*

Presiding, Dwight L. Burton, Florida State University

Speakers:

For Elementary School—

For Junior High School—Elizabeth Rose, New York University

For Senior High School—George H. Henry, University of Delaware

(Topic pursued in Discussion Groups L1, L2, L3)

Discussion Groups, 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m.

A. *How Can the Elementary Language Arts Teacher Provide for Creative Activities?*

Discussion Leader, Helen K. Mackintosh, United States Office of Education, Associate Director, Commission on the English Curriculum

Resource Consultants: W. Leslie Garnett, Kent State University
Mary Harbage, Director of Elementary Education, Akron Public Schools.
Eugenie Hunter, National College of Education, Evanston
Mary McClenaghan, Supervisor, Kindergarten-Primary Education
Tulsa Public Schools.
Kate V. Wofford, University of Florida
Mary S. Jameson, Wayne County Board of Education.

Recorder, Ethel O'Connor, Roosevelt School, Ypsilanti, Mich.

G1. Developing Self-Expression through Writing in Elementary School

Discussion Leader, Edna L. Sterling, Director of Language Arts, Seattle Public Schools.

Resource Consultants: Helen Grayum, Seattle Public Schools
Hannah Lindahl, Mishawaka, Indiana, Public Schools
Alvina Treut Burrows, New York University
Corwin Bjonerud, Wayne University
Verna L. Dieckman, Wayne University

Recorder, Dorothy White, Cheyney School, Detroit

H. How Can We Provide for the Mastery of the Fundamentals?

Discussion Leader, Vincent McGuire, Florida State University

Resource Consultants:

Reading—Rosemary M. Green, Philadelphia Public Schools
Writing—Myrtle Brandon Wilson, Appalachian State Teachers College, North Carolina
Speaking—Charlotte G. Wells, University of Missouri
Listening—Paul W. Stoddard, Housatonic Valley Regional High School, Connecticut

Recorders, Nancy White, Hillsborough, Florida, High School
Marguerite Stephens, University of Florida

J. How Can We Evaluate Effectively in the Language Arts?

Discussion Leader, Gertrud Addison, Los Angeles Public Schools

Speaker: J. C. Tressler, Jamaica Estates, New York

Resource Consultants: Brother Anthony Frederick, St. Mary's University, Texas
Ruth L. Laxson, Ball State Teachers College
Royal J. Morsey, Ball State Teachers College

Recorder, Laura Byers, West Fulton High School, Atlanta

L1. Literature for Elementary School Students

Discussion Leader, Mary Jane Klewe, Language Education Department, Detroit

Resource Consultants: John Brewton, George Peabody College for Teachers
Hortensia Dyer, Columbus Public Schools

Recorder, Rose Kelleher, Burroughs Intermediate School Detroit

N. Problems of Teaching English as a Second Language

Discussion Leader, Pauline Rojas, Department of Education, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Resource Consultants and Speakers:

In Puerto Rico—Hans Wolff, University of Puerto Rico
In Thailand—Aileen Travers Kitchin, Teachers College, Columbia University
In China—Yao Shen, University of Michigan

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

In Mexico—Ralph B. Long, University of Texas

In Los Angeles—Linda Watson, Foreign Students Department, Los Angeles

Recorder, Lonzy Powell, Atlanta Public Schools

Luncheon Session

12:30 p.m.

Books for Children: A Luncheon for Librarians and Teachers in Elementary and High Schools

Presiding, Marian Edman, Wayne University

Speaker: Marguerite Henry, Author of *King of the Wind*

Misty of Chincoteague

Sea Star

Brightly of the Grand Canyon

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Friday Afternoon Conferences

2:30 — 4:00 p.m.

Theme: *New Challenges,—New Solutions*

1. *Demonstration of Educational Television*

Presiding, Gertrude Broderick, United States Office of Education

Cooperating Agencies: Detroit Chapter of National Association of Educational Broadcasters

Association for Educational Radio and Television

Resource Consultant: William D. Boutwell, Editor, *Scholastic Teacher*

2. *Problems of Teaching English as a Second Language*

Presiding, Pauline Rojas, Department of Education, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Demonstration of Techniques Used for Teaching of English to Public School Students in Puerto Rico—*

Ralph Robinett

*Volunteers from the audience will be used as the "pupils," and the techniques will be demonstrated through Spanish.

Recorder, Margaret del Barrio, Cody High School, Detroit

4. *America Reads, but What? The Significance of Non-Literary Reading Materials*

Presiding, Max J. Herzberg, *Newark News*: NCTE Director of Publications

5. *Creative Supervision in the Language Arts*

Speaker: David H. Moskowitz, Associate Superintendent in Charge of Special Services, New York City.

8. *Grammar—Then and Now*

Presiding, Henry C. Meckel, San Jose State College

Speaker: Harry R. Warfel, University of Florida

Resource Consultant: Joe W. Andrews, University School, Kent State University.

Recorder, Gertrude Whipple, Language Education Department, Detroit

12. *Problems in Articulation*

Presiding, Amanda M. Ellis, Colorado College

Resource Consultants: Mattie Sharp Brewer, Thomas Jefferson High School, San Antonio

Ruth B. Bozell, Arsenal Technical High School, Indianapolis

Strang Lawson, Colgate University

Charles F. Van Cleve, Ball State Teachers College

Annual Dinner, 7:00 p.m.

Toastmaster, Clarence Hilberry, President of Wayne University

Invocation, The Very Reverend Celestin Steiner, S.J., President of the University of Detroit

Address: Sources of Strength in American Culture, R. S. C. Northrup, Yale University

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Saturday, November 27

Breakfast for Public Relations Representatives
and for officers of Affiliates, 8:00 a.m.

SECTION MEETINGS, 9:30—11:45 a.m.

1. Elementary Section

Presiding, Edna L. Sterling, Director of Language Arts, Seattle Public Schools; Chairman of the Elementary Section

Business Meeting

Topic: *Language Is Used All Day*

Presenting *The Language Arts for Today's Children*, Volume II of the Curriculum Series of the NCTE.

Leader: Helen K. Mackintosh, United States Office of Education

The Writing Committee:

Althea Beery, Cincinnati Public Schools

Muriel Crosby, Wilmington, Delaware, Public Schools

Mildred Dawson, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, North Carolina

Elizabeth Guilfoile, Hoffman District School, Cincinnati

Dorothy McCarthy, Fordham University

Grace Rawlings, Baltimore Public Schools

Nila B. Smith, New York University

Ruth Strickland, Indiana University

Charlotte Wells, University of Missouri

Audience Discussion: "Using Language All Day"

Leader: John Treanor, Principal, Francis Parkman School, Boston

Panel Members: The Elementary Section Committee

Edna L. Sterling, Chairman, Seattle Public Schools

Muriel Crosby, Wilmington, Delaware, Public Schools

Agnes Gunderson, University of Wyoming

Grace Rawlings, Baltimore Public Schools

Ruth Swanbeck, Keewaydin School, Minneapolis

Absent:

Irean Coyner, Oakland Public Schools, Oakland, California

Mildred Dawson, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, North Carolina

Exhibit, Celia Stern, Principal, Beard School, Detroit

Annual Luncheon, 12:15 p.m.

Presiding, Lou LaBrant, Atlanta University, President of the Council

Invocation, The Reverend Warner R. Cole, Pastor of the Covenant Baptist Church, Detroit

Address: *Books in Profile*, Virgilia Peterson

Train, Plane, or Motor

to the Motor City

44th Annual N C T E Convention

November 25-27, 1954

Detroit Statler

We introduce this month a new member of our editorial staff. MARGARET MARY CLARK is known to Council members as the editor of our excellent elementary reading list, *Adventuring with Books*. She will assist MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT in the heavy task of reviewing the best in the current output of children's books.

Question:

How can the school overcome the influence of the home in the use of poor grammar? Does the school environment eventually impress the child, or is it a hopeless situation?

Answer:

Teachers are increasingly aware of the influence of the home on language habits, but they have done almost nothing to cultivate home attitudes which would support the school program. Parents must be made increasingly aware of the values of accurate language, of the means by which improved language habits are developed at school, and of the ways in which a parent can help. Even if the language background of the parent is such that he can give no corrective assistance, he can at least engender in his children a respect for the aims and purposes of the teacher and a recognition of the social and economic values of good English.

The National Council of Teachers of English has recognized this problem in appointing a committee on informing the public, whose purpose will be to collect experiences of those who are working with the problem, and make these experiences known to all who are interested. In P.T.A. meetings, in "School Nights," in classroom English programs, and through press articles in the local newspapers, teachers of the language arts can strive constantly to make known their aims, standards, and methods of achieving them. An uninformed public can be and often is highly critical of the schools; the majority of informed parents can be confidently expected to back up the school program in the language arts.

The school situation is by no means hopeless. The large number of children from very limited backgrounds who develop speaking, writing, and reading habits strong enough to carry them successfully through high school and college are the answer to that. On the other hand, it is certainly true that the school does not

impress all children equally, and some very little. Part of the failure to develop sound language habits must be laid to us teachers. Our language programs are over-formal and mechanical. We try to teach correctness without specific communication needs, discouraging what little language initiative the child has behind a barrage of rules and errors. We teach too much grammar, too early, and too rapidly for effective learning. We spend hours on rules and drills, and neglect the training in actual speaking and writing which is the only way to develop sound language habits. There is no fun in our language arts.

The teacher who will make language a living activity, who relates life to language, who makes communication of ideas his central purpose, and who creates a happy, fun-loving, interest-arousing classroom will impress large

numbers of pupils with the importance of good language, and with a desire to attain it.

Robert C. Pooley
University of Wisconsin



QUESTION BOX

Question:

In the sixth grade, I have had an occasional child who, in his oral reading, looks at a word and calls it something else which is associated with the printed word. For instance, he will look at the word sea but call it ocean, or land and call it dirt. What should a teacher do about this type of reading fault?

Answer:

Such a child undoubtedly is a fluent silent reader who first learned to read with ease, without need for detailed analysis of new words, and still depends on contextual clues. In general, he is not a pupil who should give his teacher much concern so far as reading proficiency is concerned.

The following procedure is likely to benefit this child. Keep an informal inventory of his word substitutions over a period of a week or

two. Then have an individual conference with him when you will go over the reading selections in which his errors were made and point out each instance when he has made substitutions. Ask him to look over the selections again and notice particularly the words (perhaps underlined) which had given trouble. Later he may re-read such portions, with the definite intention of reading them exactly as printed in the book.

If the pupil's interest in reading accurately has been aroused, he may need very little more specific instruction. He will take care of his own difficulties by (1) preparing silently ahead of time for anticipated oral reading or (2) more thoughtful sight reading. If his difficulties are quite pronounced, he may need additional practice sessions in which you or a pupil-friend will record all instances of substitution and ask him to prepare with great care to read each selection exactly right, with elimination of all errors present in the first reading. Too, this pupil may assume the responsibility of meticulously preparing a short selection two or three times a week so that he may read it the first time without a single instance of substitution. The key to his improvement is his awareness of the nature of his difficulty and his awakened desire to read without substitution.

Mildred A. Dawson,
Appalachian STC
Boone, N. C.



Question:

Should manuscript writing be used exclusively in the elementary school? Could cursive writing be discontinued without a great disturbance?

Answer:

When manuscript style writing was first introduced in private and laboratory schools in this country it was carried through the grades with no thought of changing over in the intermediate or higher years. Plenty of grownups today write this style and always have because they

attended schools where no other style was taught. However, parents and teachers have sometimes encouraged children to "change over" in the belief that manuscript was a "baby" style, not so "grown up" as cursive writing; and in their opinion, more rapid. Some upper grade teachers felt unprepared to instruct children in a form of writing they did not use themselves.

In my opinion the evidence is all in favor of retaining manuscript style writing through the grades for the following reasons. This style is more legible than even the best cursive writing, chiefly because it resembles our familiar book print. Manuscript style is easier for most children to learn in the first place; consequently there is less need for drill and remedial work in the upper grades. Manuscript writing provides a tool that serves to link together all the language arts—reading, spelling, written expression, even speaking, when the children's experiences expressed in their own words are recorded by the teacher and the pupils themselves. Writing habits begin to be established early. To "change over" somewhere in the third grade may interfere with habits being built, and requires reteaching to some extent because many strokes in cursive style are the opposite of those in manuscript writing. Although most children do make the change-over successfully around the end of the second grade, the value of this writing tool for integrated teaching of the language arts is then lost. Far from being babyish, here we have a beautiful form of script, serviceable throughout a lifetime. As for speed, the earliest evidence gathered in England showed no difference. My own studies on this point confirmed the earlier conclusion, and no data to the contrary have appeared since.¹

The demands for changing over center largely in grades 4-6. Before then the advantages are

¹"Should Manuscript Writing be Continued in the Upper Grades?" *Elementary School Journal*, 15:85-93, February, 1944. See also the discussion on this question in *Learning the Three R's*, Educational Publishers (Minneapolis), 1947, Chapter 21.

obvious to most parents and teachers; in junior and senior high school teachers show no objection to students' papers written in manuscript style because they are chiefly concerned about neatly written, legible compositions. What if the parents complain that the children cannot read letters written in cursive style? The amount of such material the children will ever read is too slight to outweigh the superior advantages enumerated above. We are dealing here primarily with a matter of deeply-rooted tradition and changing public opinion. Cursive style writing actually is harder to do; it requires more drill for the attainment of speed and legibility; hence the tendency to associate this kind of writing with school work tasks!

Teachers seriously interested in retaining manuscript writing throughout the grades *should always refer to this style as writing* from the first grade onward. "See the beautiful *writing* our beginners are doing! How much the children have improved in their handwriting!" Never refer to it as PRINTING or even PRINT WRITING. This confuses both teachers and the public because PRINTING suggests the large block letters of headlines and captions. To explain to anyone what manuscript style is like, just say that it resembles typed letter styles in general. Upper grade teachers who wish to instruct children in manuscript style writing should learn to use this style themselves and study methods of teaching the skill. Good illustrations of manuscript writing used throughout the grades will be found in *They all Want to Write* by Burrows, Ferebee and others, Prentice-Hall, New York.

Gertrude Hildreth
Brooklyn College, New York
July 16, 1954

Question:

Generally speaking, when is the best time to call attention to the errors (in verb usage, for example) made during an oral recitation or speech?

Answer:

The best time to correct errors in oral language is when the teacher and the child in question have achieved confidence in themselves and one another. The best place is in privacy, if privacy can be termed a place. It is natural to resist suggestions for changes in personality, and language is of the essence of personality. Indeed, it is unlikely that a child can accept language changes from someone outside of his family unless that person is one he relates to warmly and positively. To overweight the effect of family influence on language usage is a delicate problem in human relations.

In classroom practice this means that teachers do not attempt to correct "have went" or "he done it" during the stage of getting acquainted. Even adults rarely imitate the speech patterns of strangers with whom they are still on guard. (After acquaintance has ripened into mutual respect and friendliness, however, some ways are open to the teacher who is concerned about gross error.)

In primary grades one may, in private conversation, unobtrusively repeat the correct form for a child who says "I seen a big guerrilla in the circus." If he senses the correction and goes on to tell more about the guerrilla at least no damage has been done. When another opportunity seems right, the teacher may directly ask the child to say "I saw." If there is much oral language in the class, much sharing of experiences, the child thus sensitized may actually hear "I saw" as he has not heard it before. It may at another time be useful to copy and illustrate: "I saw a . . ." filling the blank with a colorful or exciting picture. Conversation in such a lesson could have many values both as to content and language usage.

Older children need the same consideration as to privacy and acquaintance. Happily, informal classroom organization permits children to talk with other children who speak well as well as with the teacher. Conversation—a real exchange and meeting of minds rather than mere-

ly asking and answering questions—makes possible a goodly number of opportunities for individual substitution of correct forms.

A class campaign can also help at times. Poll the class as to forms to be practiced. Plan positive ways of making "I have done" *sound* right. These may include: (1) listen to a radio or TV speech and score the times the correct form was heard, (2) have committees take turns listening in class for half-hour periods to hear how many times the correct form was used. (3) Make up oral exercises in which partners practice the desired form clearly and emphatically for 30 seconds each. (4) Have a brief exercise in which children make up "magic tricks" they have done.

In brief, such concerted attacks must be short and active; they must embarrass no one. Correction must never interrupt a speaker nor detract from the worth of a child or his communication.

Children who really want to correct gross usages need one important protection. They must be told not to correct their parents' speech. Children, like teachers, need to learn that a person can correct habitual patterns only if *he* wants to.

Alvina Treut Burrows
University of California

The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS¹

Teaching a unit on safety? Need some new cartoons for your bulletin board? Send for *The Passing Scene*, the 1954 Book of Street and Highway Accident Data. Intermediate and upper grade children may or may not get much from the statistics and discussion, but the cartoons by 14 of America's leading cartoonists contain a good lesson and will bring a hearty chuckle from them.

The Passing Scene is free. Request a copy from the Public Information Service, The Travelers Insurance Companies, Hartford, Conn.



Songs Children Like: Folk Songs from Many Lands, a song book for children five to twelve years of age, has been compiled by the Association for Childhood Education International in cooperation with the Department of Children's Work, Division of Christian Education, National Council of Churches.

The foreword of the songbook says, "*Songs Children Like* is for people—those young in years, those young in heart. When people—both children and adults—sing together, tensions lessen and barriers melt away. Singing together releases feelings, encourages fellowship, and often opens the way to lasting friendships."

The 60 songs from 21 nationalities are varied. There are songs of outdoors, fun, action, seasons—rollicking songs, quiet ones, and some religious songs. They were selected by a joint committee of the Association for Childhood Education International and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. The songs can be used in homes, schools, camps, and vacation church schools. Among countries represented in the song book are America, Austria, Indonesia, England, Denmark, Korea, China, Russia, Poland, Spain, Japan, Iceland, Canada, Latin America,

¹Wisconsin State College, Milwaukee.

Israel, Germany, and Hawaii.

Songs Children Like—Folk Songs From Many Lands is \$1.48 pages. Order from Association for Childhood Education International, 2100 - 15th Street, N. W., Washington 5, D. C.



Field Enterprises, Inc. is offering free an exceptionally good reprint from their *World Book Encyclopedia*, which *Educational Scene* readers will find very useful. "Literature for Children" is thirty compact and concise pages which discuss the history of this very esoteric literary field, some of its editors, authors, and illustrators, and a few of its current trends. Better still is the annotated bibliography of several hundred children's books, by age groups, which forms the last half of the reprint.

Single copies of "Literature for Children" are available free upon request from the World Book Reference Library, Field Enterprises, Inc., Merchandise Mart Plaza, Chicago 54.



A new booklet just published by the American Heart Association, *Have Fun . . . Get Well*, is directed primarily to young people and to parents whose children are ill with rheumatic fever or rheumatic heart disease. The specific suggestions can be helpful to all parents and convalescents. The purpose of the pamphlet is to help the parent and the child make the time of physical repair a period that is mentally and spiritually constructive.

Copies may be obtained from the American Heart Association, 44 East 23rd Street, New York 10.



The National Conference of Christians and Jews has released its "Reading for Democracy" booklist for young Americans. Issued biennially by the Chicago office, it includes brief annotations of 43 current volumes for children chosen because they are good reading and present stories designed to enlarge a child's horizon to include, naturally, and with good will, people of different races, faiths, and nationality origins.

Write to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, 203 North Wabash, Chicago.



Learning at Its Best is a delightful little pamphlet published by the Philadelphia Branch, Association for Childhood Education International. In clear, candid pictures and brief text the way the child learns as he sees, hears and handles things about him is vividly illustrated. He is seen exploring and investigating to see how things tick, becoming sensitive to their nature, all the while planning and working with others and taking his place in his group and his environment.

No new concepts are provided by the booklet and no philosophy is expounded. But the teacher's role is clearly shown. Here she provides the situation, there she helps him evaluate, and in another instance she merely looks on warmly and in a friendly fashion. Children learn best doing all the things they are shown doing in this booklet. The role of the teacher is merely that of the guide.

Copies of *Learning at Its Best* may be obtained for sixty cents from Dr. Mary E. Coleman, School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 4.



Ten new books have been added to the *Landmark Books* series (American history; for boys and girls):

31. *The Barbary Pirates*, C. S. Forester
32. *Sam Houston, the Tallest Texan*, William Johnson
33. *The Winter at Valley Forge*, Van Wyck Mason
34. *The Erie Canal*, Samuel Hopkins Adams
35. *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, Ted Lawson and Bob Considine
37. *The Coming of the Mormons*, Jim Kjelgaard
38. *George Washington Carver, the Story of a Great American*, Anne Terry White
39. *John Paul Jones, Fighting Sailor*,

written and illustrated by Armstrong Sperry.

40. *The First Overland Mail*, Robert Pinkerton

Ten titles are now available in Landmark's series for young readers (world history, junior high school):

W-1 *The First Men in the World*, Anne Terry White

W-2 *Alexander the Great*, John Gunther

W-3 *The Adventures and Discoveries of Marco Polo*, Richard J. Walsh

W-4 *Joan of Arc*, Nancy Wilson Ross

W-5 *King Arthur and His Knights*, Mabel L. Robinson

W-6 *Mary, Queen of Scots*, Emily Hahn

W-7 *Napoleon and the Battle of Waterloo*, Frances Winwar

W-8 *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*, Richard L. Neuberger

W-9 *The Man Who Changed China: the Story of Sun Yat-Sen*, Pearl S. Buck

W-10 *The Battle of Britain*, Quentin Reynolds

We have mentioned previously the superior qualities of these books. Their vital statistics are these: each book is priced at \$1.50, with a 25% discount to schools and libraries; 192 pages each; size 5½ x 8¼; cloth binding; publisher is Random House, 457 Madison Avenue, New York 22.



Materials for Looking and Listing

Our review copies are in Wisconsin as we go to press from New Jersey, so we can only mention four new late-summer releases from Enrichment Records. The records are based on the Landmark Books by the authors indicated:

Pocahontas and Captain John Smith (Marie Lawson)

Daniel Boone (John Mason Brown)

The Winter at Valley Forge (Van Wyck Mason)

Sam Houston, the Tallest Texan (William Johnson)

Enrichment Records are complete drama-

tizations, including dialogue, sound effects, and music of the various historical periods. Well-known Broadway and radio actors play the parts. Adapter of the books and director of studio production is Howard Tooley, who produced the historical pageants for both the Chicago and New York World's Fairs. *Elementary English* readers may recall that Enrichment Materials, Inc. was awarded, for the Enrichment Records series of *Landmark* recordings, the 1952 citation of merit by the Freedom Foundation for "outstanding achievement in bringing about a better understanding of the American way of life."

In case you missed them before, other records in the series are:

Voyages of Christopher Columbus (Armstrong Sperry; 15th century Te Deums)

Landing of the Pilgrims (James Daugherty; authentic hymns and music)

California Gold Rush (May McNeer; Stephen Foster songs of the period)

Riding the Pony Express (Samuel Hopkins Adams; Stephen Foster songs and Indian music)

Paul Revere and the Minute Men (Dorothy Canfield Fisher; soldiers' songs of the American Revolution)

Our Independence and the Constitution (Dorothy Canfield Fisher; authentic colonial songs and music)

Building the First Transcontinental Railroad (Adele Nathan; work songs and music of the period)

"Leads to Listening," prepared by Dr. Helen McCracken Carpenter, a teaching guide for each title, accompanies each order. As an additional service, college teachers of teachers may borrow a collection of Enrichment Records for use with their classes.

The records come in both 78 (standard) and 33 1/3 (long play) rpm at \$2.80 and \$3.76 respectively. Information about Enrichment Records may be obtained from Martha Huddleston, the director, at 246 Fifth Avenue, New York 1.



Educators Guide to Free Slidefilms, Sixth Annual Edition, 1954, is an annotated listing of 708 slidefilm titles, 40 of which may be retained permanently by ordering teachers or schools. The 1954 edition contains 99 titles which were not listed in the 1953 edition. Entries include order number, date of issue, source, whether silent or sound, and a clear, brief annotation. Of the 708 listings, 364 are silent, 335 have sound, and 9 are in sets. Many are available in color.

Unfortunately, *Elementary English* readers will find that the 33 slidefilms which were available in the language arts area in 1951 and 1952 are no longer listed. However, English teachers (especially those whose classwork is organized into units) may find useful slidefilms in the large social studies listing for example. We think the best idea is for you to ask your school librarian to order a copy for the use of the entire staff. The slidefilms which you can add to the school's library without cost will make the purchase worthwhile. Order the *Guide* from the Educators Progress Service, Randolph, Wisconsin. The price is \$5.00 per copy.



Two recent films:

What the Frost Does. Coronet Films. Black and white or color. 10 min. For the primary grades. Sammy, who lives on a farm, watches the seasonal changes of fall and early winter. He wants a big jack-o-lantern, and when he finds a pumpkin still on the vine, he knows that it will continue to grow until frost. One night frost comes. The next morning Sammy and his dad bring in the biggest pumpkin you ever saw.

The Good Loser. Young America Films. Black and white. 13 min. For intermediate grades and up. The story is about a boy who is accustomed to winning. He finds himself in the role of the loser and has difficulty in accepting

his defeat gracefully. The film should be excellent for teaching good sportsmanship.

A recent series of filmstrips:

Music Stories. Six filmstrips. Jam Handy Films. Color. Sound. 29-31 frames. For the primary grades and up. Six stories which inspired composers to write some of our best-loved music are fancifully told in this series of filmstrips: *Peter and the Wolf*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Nutcracker Suite*, *Peer Gynt*, *The Firebird*, and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Each story is presented in harmony with the nationality and theme of the music. The imaginative character of the art work complements the classic stories.



The Junior Literary Guild, observing its 25th anniversary a few months ago, noted that it has distributed more than ten million books to youthful readers since its founding. Four members of the original editorial board are still serving: Helen Ferris, editor-in-chief, Sidonie M. Gruenberg, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Angelo Patri. A place held by the late Carl Van Doren is now occupied by Albert B. Tibbets.

Here are the Guild's selections for October:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old:

Animals Everywhere by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire Doubleday & Co., Inc., \$2.00

For boys and girls 7 & 8 years old:

Professor Bull's Umbrella by William Lipkind. The Viking Press, Inc., \$2.50.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years old:

The Wonderful Flight To The Mushroom Planet by Eleanor Cameron Little, Brown & Co.

For girls, 12 to 16 years old:

Epics of Everest by Leonard Wibberley Farrar, Straus & Young, Inc., \$3.25

For boys, 12 to 16 years of age:

Operation Getaway by Ronald Seth The John Day Co., Inc., \$2.75



May Hill Arbuthnot



Margaret Mary Clark

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Edited by MAY HILL ARBUTHNOT

Mrs. Arbuthnot is well-known as a writer and lecturer in the field of children's literature. She is the author of CHILDREN AND BOOKS (Scott, Foresman, 1947) and three anthologies, combined in the single volume, THE ARBUTHNOT ANTHOLOGY (Scott, Foresman, 1953).

MARGARET MARY CLARK reviews books of science, social studies, and biography. Miss Clark is head of the Lewis Carroll Room, Cleveland Public Library, and editor of ADVENTURING WITH BOOKS. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1950).

For the picture book age

Easter Treat. By Roger Duvoisin. Illustrated by the author. Knopf, 1954. \$2.00. (4-8).

In spite of the incongruity of Santa Claus and a springtime adventure, Mr. Duvoisin makes Santa's longing for a change of climate and a little leisure seem very natural. For Santa, all dressed up in lovely new sport clothes, just like a tourist, pays a visit to New York in the springtime. He loves the daffodils, Easter eggs, and candy rabbits in the store windows. But when children surround him and accuse him of having stolen Santa Claus' beard and his gay twinkle, the good saint is hard pressed. It is all happily settled and Santa goes back to Mrs. Claus with a sleigh full of Easter presents and a warm, happy memory of springtime in the city. This little tale is as light as spun sugar, but in spite of its mythical hero, it has a tender human quality both in the story and the gay bright pictures.

M. H. A.

The Loudest Noise in the World. By Benjamin Elkin. Pictures by James Daugherty. Viking, 1954. \$2.50. (4-7)

All the young whistle-tooters, ack-ack gunners, and door-slammers will envy Prince Hullabaloo's remarkable idea that for his birthday he

wanted the loudest noise ever heard. You would have thought that it was enough to live in Hub-Bub, the noisiest city in the world. True, Prince Hullabaloo admired the shrillness of the police whistles and the continual yelling of his subjects. Hullabaloo liked to yell himself, bang pans, and knock over piles of tin cans and pails. But he was tired of these. He wanted a bigger and better noise for his birthday and he had a great idea. On a certain hour, minute, and second of his birthday everyone in the entire



From *The Loudest Noise in the World*

world was to yell together. Even the King thought this was a remarkable idea, and besides, it would make him the first King in history who had ever persuaded everyone in the whole world to do the same thing. Now what happened on that epoch-making, ear-splitting second is too good a surprise to give away. It is enough to say that it will make all the young Hulla-Baloos smile and their parents beam.

James Daugherty's pictures, in his favorite browns and black, have even more action than usual. Such gay, rollicking action would make a ballet dancer envious! In fact, the dancing movement in these pictures continually suggests the ballet. Children skip, circle, and do leaps. They point their toes and arch their fingers and arms in proper balance. The King executes a pirouette, tribes and nations join hands in a triumphant fandango, and even the pup cavorts with grace and abandon. The pictures more than illustrate. They illumine the text, and story and pictures together make a joyous whole.

M. H. A.

Mike's House. By Julia Sauer. Pictures by Don Freeman. Viking, 1954. \$2.50. (4-7)

This delightful story is a tribute to Children's Rooms in public libraries and to that well-loved book of Virginia Burton's, *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*.

Julia Sauer is herself a librarian as well as a writer of



From *Mike's House*

unusual sensitivity and originality. *Mike's House* is no exception, and her Foreword is worth quoting. In it she says, "I wish that parents could understand that sometimes a certain book is as satisfying to take to bed, or make a companion of as a teddy bear, a panda, or a doll. Perhaps then they would more often buy a

copy of it for the child who can't bear to part with it even though he has had it from the library. If he wants it again and again, it must still have truth for him that he hasn't exhausted."

That is the way four-year-old Robert felt about *Mike Mulligan*. It was his favorite book and it lived in a big house that wasn't the Public Library to Robert, but "Mike's House." This was all very well until Robert got lost. Then when he insisted that he must meet his mother at "Mike's house," and the policeman who was trying to help him could find no Mike Mulligan in the directory, it was all very baffling, both to the policeman and to Robert. His adventure is funny and children who know *Mike Mulligan* savor the joke and are tickled by the obtuseness of the grownups who try to help Robert. Mr. Freeman's pictures show a sturdy, earnest little boy, and interpret this story with rare perception.

M. H. A.

Flash of Washington Square. By Margaret Pratt. Illustrated by Roger Duvoisin. Lothrop, 1954. \$2.00. (5-10)



Mr. Duvoisin has also contributed some of his loveliest pictures to this excellent dog story, written in rhyme. Flash is a loveable but impetuous cocker, who dashes around with such abandon that Mr. Drew, his owner, decides the dog must go to a dog school

to learn manners. Robert Drew, his father, and Flash set off with high hopes, but alas! Flash disrupts the decorum of the docile hounds at the dog school so completely that he is sent home in disgrace. Then Mr. Drew sternly takes a stand—Flash must go! Now everyone who has ever owned a dog, including the gifted Mr. Duvoisin, realizes that dogs understand what their families are saying and thinking, even if they can't speak for themselves. So the pictures show Flash

brooding deeply and sadly over the whole matter. How he saves himself is dog-like and credible, and children who read or see and hear this delightful story sigh with relief and agree with Mrs. Drew that Flash is "sweet." Then they say, "Let's read it again." M. H. A.

Babies and Babies!

When You Were a Baby. By Rhoda Berman.
Pictures by Mariana. Lothrop, 1954. \$2.00.
(4-7)



For the child who is disappointed with the red-faced, crying bundle of helplessness that is the new baby, this light-hearted picture book should help. The appealing pictures are in the pinks and blues proper for babies, the narrative is in rhyme, and the ap-

proach is personal throughout. The child is reminded of how helpless *he* was when *he* was a baby—no hair, no teeth, unable to walk or talk, and forever throwing his food on the floor! Then the reassuring record begins of how *he* began to grow and how *he* learned to do things. It is all very satisfactory in the end and it should be first-aid to families where an older child takes a dim view of the new baby. Mariana's pictures are just right for such a book.

M. H. A.

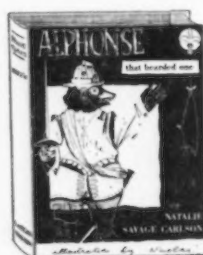
Johnny Jack and His Beginnings. By Pearl Buck.
Illustrations by Kurt Werth. John Day, 1954. \$2.50. (4-7)

This is by far the best statement that has been written for young children, of how babies begin and are born. In completely natural conversations between a busy mother and a questioning boy, this distinguished author has told the story of conception, pregnancy, and birth, both with animals and human beings. But it is all so casual that its light touch belies the unusually frank and complete coverage of

the answers. This reviewer has read and reread the text with increasing admiration for Pearl Buck's skill in maintaining a remarkable balance between homely realism and the idealism of the family picture. The tone of the book is warm and gay, the answers completely honest and understandable, with one exception. Figures of speech in this field are invariably confusing and "the water of life in a secret fountain" certainly is. Otherwise this is about as wholesome a presentation of the facts of life for the young child as parents could ask for. Like the text, the illustrations have a joyous earthy quality with beauty too. M. H. A.

Facts and Fancy for Young Readers 6-10

Alphonse, That Bearded One. By Natalie Savage Carlson. Illustrated by Nicholas. Harcourt, 1954. \$2.50. (6-10)



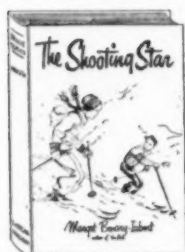
The publishers tell us that this unusually droll tall tale comes from French Canada. It relates the story of shrewd Jean-not Vallar who heard that the governor was going to recruit men for a fight against the Indians.

Jean-not had no taste for soldiering, so he set to work to train his tame bear to take his place. Alphonse learned his lessons so well that when the soldiers came to conscript Vallar, they were afraid of "that bearded one" but were finally persuaded to take him in place of Vallar. In camp the French soldiers declared Alphonse was a bear in spite of his excellent drilling. But when they fed him snuff and he flew into a rage and nearly cleaned up the army, they changed their minds, and he won the respect of all. His final triumph came when he was sent with two soldiers to spy on the Indians. The men bungled everything and all three were close to death when Alphonse saved the day and actually brought peace between the Indians and the white settlers. After that great honors were heaped upon the bearded one. But what does a

bear want with a seignury, servants, and the life of a nobleman? Tearing off that miserable uniform and those tight boots from which he had suffered so long, Alphonse, on all fours at last, made off for the forest where bears are bears and the army can go hang. Pictures and text frolic along with compatible hilarity.

M. H. A.

The Shooting Star. By Margot Benary-Isbert. Translated from the German by Richard and Clara Winston. Illustrated by Oscar Liebman. Harcourt, 1954. \$2.25. (8-12).



Neither Annegret nor her mother wanted to leave father for a vacation in Switzerland, but that is what the doctor insisted they must do. By the time they reached Arosa and stepped out into the cold, thin air of the moun-

tains, Annegret began to be interested. Snow was falling, the lake was frozen, a bright red sleigh drawn by powerful horses pulled them up the mountain to a wonderful little chalet called, "The Shooting Star." Their host was an astronomer with a small observatory attached to his house. This is the story of Annegret's winter among the sturdy mountain folk, and what she learned from them. The boy Jürg taught her to ski and to work. He was a stern instructor in both fields but Annegret was an apt pupil. She split wood, waxed skis, cleaned the animals' stalls, grew skillful at skiing, and was well content. There was one perilous adventure in a snowstorm that might have been fatal. Annegret had a curious little fantasy about a donkey that seemed to her to belong to the New Testament Nativity story rather than to modern times. But for the most part, this is an outdoor book of winter in Switzerland, its sports, its people, and its ideals. For younger children than *The Ark*, by the same author, it has a similar beauty of text and spirit.

M. H. A.

Hamlet and Brownswiggle. By Barbara L. Reynolds. Illustrated by Robert Henneberger. Scribner's, 1954. \$2.50. (7-10).



Children who liked Mrs. Reynolds' *Pepper* will welcome this new story of pet complications; so will hamster devotees and so will the special child who has discovered that being the middle child in the family is really hard going. The book opens with Ricky and his family on

tour by automobile from city to city. On the trip Ricky acquires and later loses a hamster. By the time he gets his pet back, he is at home, and the possessor of so much newly acquired information about hamsters that the Tri-State Hamster Club bursts into being. The members gain a still more complete knowledge of hamsters and their baffling ways, and their work on the relief of flood victims is admirable and induced by the plight of one of their tri-state members. Casual sex information, delightful family relations, and a lively hero make this almost as good a story as *Pepper*. M. H. A.

For the oldest boys and girls, 10

Sea Pup. By Archie Binns. Illustrated by Robert Candy. Little, Brown, 1954. \$2.50. (10-)

Boys and girls who read this book will want to go to Puget Sound and capture a sea pup of their own, for a more engaging pet has never



From *Sea Pup*

been described than Buster, a harbor seal. But this is much more than a pet story. It is the story of a science-minded boy, the lonely, exciting outdoor life of study and adventure which

he lives, and the close family ties that bind mother, father, and boy into a warm family group.

Thirteen-year-old Clint was interested in oceanography, a science he had every opportunity to pursue, since he lived on an isolated bay of Puget Sound and was in or on the water continually. When, on one of his solitary sailing expeditions, he rescued a day-old seal whose mother had been shot, his laboratory of ocean creatures was unexpectedly enriched. Mother and father accepted the baby seal reluctantly, with many dire warnings, but from the first the seal was so friendly and his antics were so funny that he won them all, even "Mom." Buster learned to catch milk, streamlined into his mouth directly from the cow. But when he took over the milking himself, carried his new skill over to the neighbors' cows, and milked them dry, it was a serious matter. It was funny when he discovered the charms of music and swayed in perfect time, like an earnest, bewhiskered conductor. But the sudden entrance of this huge sea creature into the music-filled living room of some strange house, almost frightened the owners out of their wits. Worst of all was the continual menace from the sea of irresponsible fisherman who were forever shooting seals. Buster finally disappeared and Clint was frantic. His attempts to find his friend at night, alone in his little sloop, in a sea full of killer whales, is one of the most exciting episodes in the book, and there are many. Buster returned badly wounded, but the whole family worked over him and saved his life. He repaid them with complete devotion and more problems. Clint had to face grave decisions about his pet and his own future. The boy's records of sea creatures had attracted the attention of a famous oceanographer who thought Clint should attend a city high school in order to get adequate preparation for his college work in science. But what of Buster? It was the hardest decision of Clint's life and there seemed to be no right solution. But there was a compromise solution, to be sure,

but right both for the boy and the seal.

This remarkable story of a deep love between a boy and seal, with its background of tides, storms, and strange creatures of sea and shore gives city children a glimpse of an outdoor world they may never know for themselves. One ten-year-old returned the book sadly, remarking, "Clint and Buster were wonderful. I hated to finish the book it was so good. If only I could live like Clint!"

M. H. A.

Hay-Foot, Straw-Foot. Written and illustrated by Erick Berry. Viking, 1954. (10-41).

Lively as the tunes he whistles, determined as the army he is trying to join, Si Cameron is a captivating hero. It is the time of the French and Indian wars, and skinny, twelve-year-old Si, with his clothes stuffed with straw for bulk and standing on tiptoe for height, is trying to enlist. He is firmly rejected, of course, but will Si return to his uncle? No sire! Si is an opportunist. so he sticks to the camp, still hoping to get in the army and maybe have a bite or two to eat in the meantime. His first victim, or perhaps we should say, protégé, is an awkward recruit who can't learn the drills. Si, with his inborn sense of rhythm and his clear, trilling whistle,



From *Hay-Foot, Straw-Foot*

teaches Con to march with style, to respond to and give commands. Con is a sergeant in no time at all and Si's friend for life. Sergeant Con gets Si food but no place in the army, so Si decides he'll be a drummer boy, even though he has no drum and doesn't know how to play one. He whistles for the men and they love it. When the army sergeant hears a wonderful tune Si is whistling for a march, he starts composing words for the tune. Between them, they evolve the song we now know as "Yankee Doodle." After that, Si bribes the fat drummer boy, with choice items of food for the loan of the company drum for practice periods. Once Si actually has a chance to drum for his beloved company; and the tucks and rolls he draws out of that drum came "bounding off the drumhead like grasshoppers!" Despair follows triumph for poor Si as his company is mustered out and he is supposedly left behind. But not Si! His ingenuity is far from exhausted and how he lands in the army at last, as official drummer boy, is not easily accomplished, but his machinations succeed grandly. Elbows up, drumsticks flying to the marching tune of "Yankee Doodle," and Si whistling like a piper! "Oh, t'was a most glorious day!" the book says in conclusion, both for Si and the army, united at last.

Miss Berry conscientiously tells what is fact and what is fiction in this book, but if this isn't the origin of "Yankee Doodle" it ought to be, for Si is irresistible. This story will dramatize as vigorously as it reads, and children will like it both ways.

M. H. A.

Biography

The Story of George Washington Carver. By Arna Bontemps. Illustrated by Harper Johnson. Signature Books. Grosset and Dunlap. 1954. \$1.50 (9-13)

From the time he was an undersized stuttering small boy, George Washington Carver knew that he wanted an education more than anything in the world, and he set out to earn it by doing housework in other people's homes. Arna Bontemps has given a warm and sympathetic pic-

ture of the great botanist's early struggles, his efforts to help the people of the South, and his humility when his achievements were recognized. The book is directed to much younger readers than the Shirley Graham biography of Carver, and has many black-and-white sketches to add to its appeal.

M. M. C.

True Adventures of Pirates. By Seymour G. Pond. Illustrated by Frederick Chapman. Little, Brown & Co. 1954 \$2.75 (11-14)

Here are seven dramatic tales that have considerable substance as well as swift moving pace. The piratical adventures of Dragut, Lolonnais, Blackbeard, North, Low, De Soto (not the famed explorer), and Gow are described, and each story gives a picture of the times and the social and economic influences of piratical activities. A fascinating additional chapter tells of the immense wealth that was seized during the



From *True Adventures of Pirates*

shortlived careers of the sea robbers, the types of ships they employed, current value of moneys in use at the time, and maroons and havens. A

section on the laws by which pirates governed themselves gives illuminating insight into their own strange codes of honor. M. M. C.

Theodore Roosevelt: an Initial Biography. Written and illustrated by Genevieve Foster. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1954. \$2.25 (10-13).



There is interesting development of theme in this biography of Roosevelt, for each chapter treats of an episode or trend in his life. At the conclusion of the book the reader has the highlights: his happy family life, his early frailty, and efforts to gain health through exercising, his sense of fun, his love of hunting and adventure, and his integrity both as a citizen and as President. Colorful illustrations done in the same vein as other titles in this series make the book attractive for younger readers. Since three quarters of the book is devoted to Roosevelt's adult life, this simply written biography could be used with over-age slow readers. M. M. C.

Winged Moccasins: the Story of Sacajawaea. By Frances Joy Farnsworth. Illustrated by Lorence F. Bjorklund. Julian Messner Inc. 1954. \$2.75 (12 and up.)



Sacajawaea, the Indian heroine of the Lewis and Clark expedition, is well known, but only meager facts of her earlier or later life have been related. This biography, based on comparatively recent research, gives a more comprehensive picture of the Shoshone

Indian Chief's daughter who from her earliest years longed to travel far beyond the country inhabited by her people. Captured and enslaved by another tribe, and later sold to the French trapper, Charbonneau, new worlds opened for her when she accompanied her husband as guide and interpreter on the famous expedition to the Pacific. The facts of her later life are equally absorbing: the years with Charbonneau until he drove her away through his cruelty, and the happy union with a Comanche brave, which lasted for a quarter of a century, and brought her five other children besides the infant Baptiste, who had journeyed with her on the Lewis and Clark expedition. The author's bibliography is brief but authoritative, and she has created a compelling and sympathetic character whose life had many harsh passages as well as triumphs during her ninety years. The book is a particular contribution to juvenile literature because it offers such a fine portrayal of a character who has been so widely and yet so incompletely known. M. M. C.

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